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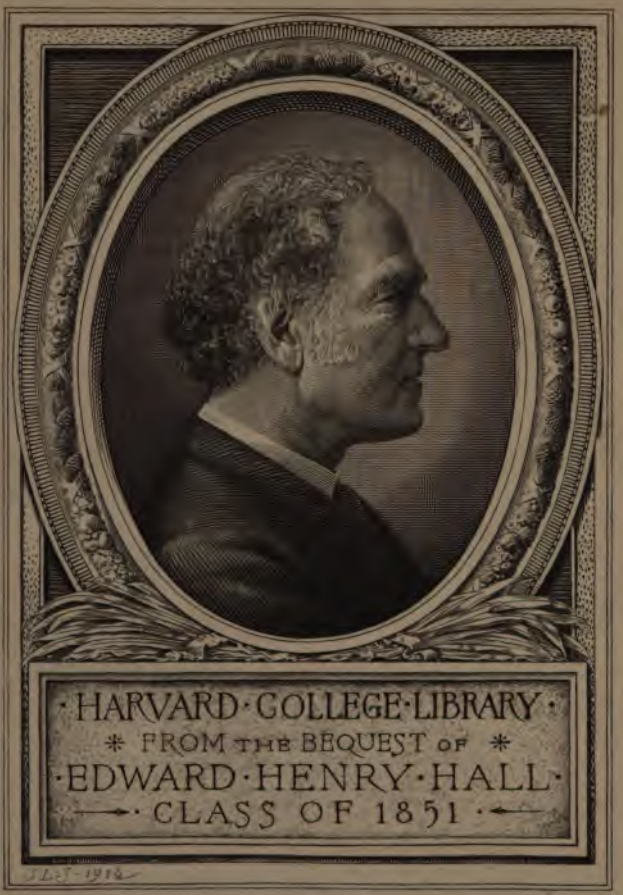
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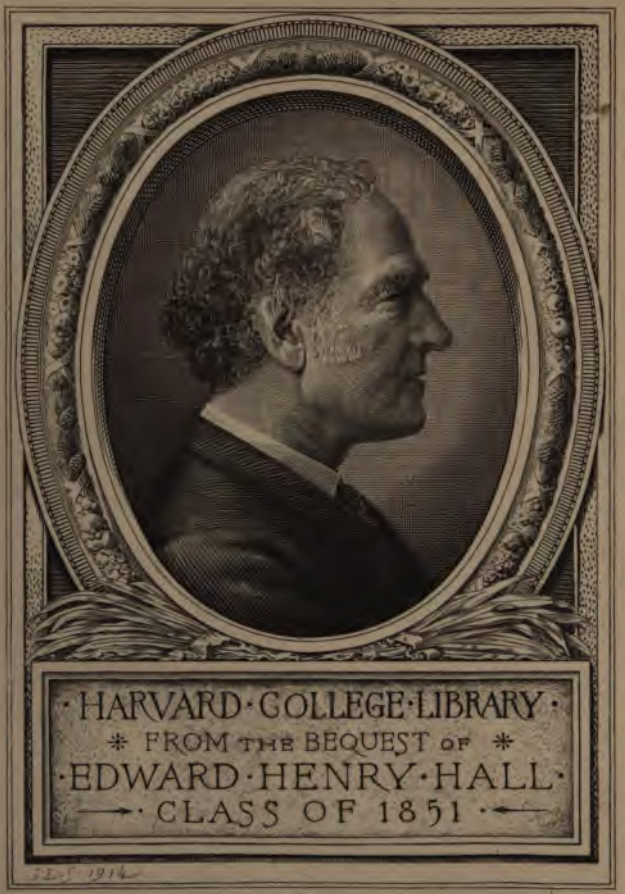

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PRESIDENT FRANK K. SANDERS, PH.D.
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VOLUME VII

## THE MESSAGES OF THE POETS

The Messages of the Bible

# THE MESSAGES OF THE POETS

THE BOOKS OF JOB AND CANTICLES AND SOME MINOR POEMS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, WITH INTRODUCTIONS, METRICAL TRANSLATIONS, AND PARAPHRASES

BY

NATHANIEL SCHMIDT, M.A.

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TO MY WIFE

# PREFACE

The Book of Job is one of the great masterpieces in the world's literature. No other work has come down to us from Hebrew antiquity that makes so strong an appeal to modern man by the problems fearlessly presented in it and its manner of approach to their solution. It is impossible to read the poem, even in a prose translation, without being impressed with its beauty of style, its grandeur of thought, and its deep moral earnestness. The attempt has here been made to recover its original form, to trace its gradual growth, to reproduce its peculiar poetic structure, and to estimate its ethical and religious significance. The interpreter is fully aware of the difficulties of his task. How far he has succeeded in rendering the poet's thought, without admixture of his own, is for others to judge. The dialogues appear to him to have a certain un-Hebraic stamp due to foreign influence, but he recognizes also in them that tendency at all hazards to go to the roots of things which is so characteristic of the Hebrew mind when it breaks away from tradition.

Canticles holds a unique place among the books of the Bible. It is manifestly not of a religious nature, in the

ordinary sense of the word; and it does not, like Esther, deal with Israel, the people of Yahwe. Yet its position in the Canon of Scripture has naturally led to various attempts to find in it a religious meaning, or at least what may be deemed a worthy moral purpose. Hence the songs that once were sung by irreverent youth in wine-shops to inflame their passions have also been chanted by mystics in sacred places to celebrate the soul's union with God. The text that, with its suggestive headings proclaiming the hidden sense, for ages nourished the spiritual life by setting forth pictures of a more than human love has in the last century, been parcelled out among a new set of *dramatis personæ*, taking the place of the Christ, the Church, the Virgin, and the believing soul, and telling the story of a maiden's faithfulness to her shepherd lover in spite of the seductions of Solomon's harem. From the Procrustean bed of dramatic construction, this long-suffering product of the Hebrew muse has more recently been carried to the Syrian threshing-table, where sit the humble peasant and his bride, playing king and queen during the days of their marriage feast, to inspire a proper appreciation of the joys of holy matrimony. *Exeunt* Solomon in all his glory, Sulamith in her maidenly innocence, and the faithful shepherd; enter rustics shamming royalty, sword-dancers, and village poets with their *wasfs* so redolent with eroticism that every image hides an allusion to the pleasures of wedded love. To the present writer Canticles is simply

an anthology of love lyrics, like that of Meleager, springing from the poet's experience, and describing, with much charm and delicacy, the frankly sensuous and somewhat unconventional, yet none the less genuine, love of man and woman. It is in need of no apology. There is no good reason for transposing its lines so as to construct songs different from those the text presents. The key to its inner meaning so eagerly offered by the new school of allegorists may, without serious loss, be thrown away, and the wonderful descriptions of Syrian scenery enjoyed as *bona fide* expressions of a sense of nature's beauty.

Thirty poems scattered through the books of the Bible have been brought together and placed before the reader in an English translation that seeks to reproduce the metre and strophic structure of the original. Some of them possess great literary value; many are important because of the light they throw on the history of Israel; all are interesting from the view-point of ethics and religion. Every new effort to interpret them has deepened the conviction of the author of this book that most of them belong to an earlier period than is generally admitted by the leading critics of to-day. There are some Songs of the Conquest that seem to antedate the Song of Deborah, and help to illumine the dark period of the Hebrew invasion. The age of David and Solomon appears to have been richer in literary productions of abiding worth than recent scholars have been disposed to acknowledge. On

the other hand, the older songs seem to have preserved more of the polytheism and crude religious practices left behind by Israel's subsequent growth than has been suspected. This, of course, does not detract from, but rather enhances, the great spiritual achievement by which a purer faith developed. Strangely enough, the poetic character of the exquisite Song of Youth and Age in Ecclesiastes has not hitherto been recognized.

In the introduction an effort has been made to gauge the value of Hebrew poetry by comparison with that of other nations. Such a use of the comparative method is as yet new, and only long practice can give surety of judgment. A really fair estimate will be possible only after the last vestiges shall have disappeared of the isolation in which it has been customary to contemplate the poetic lore of ancient Israel. Questions concerning rhythm and metre have been discussed more fully than in any other volume of this series. This seemed desirable in order to justify the form given to the important poems here presented in English. Though a complete presentation of the author's views naturally could not be given, but must be reserved for another place, he wished to indicate at least the salient points, and to emphasize the necessity of co-ordinating the results obtained by students of psychology with those gained by metricists. The limitations of space imposed by the desire to present the poems in a metrical translation rather than in a paraphrase, as has

been done so successfully in other volumes of this series, rendered it necessary to abbreviate the commentary. If any reader should miss, in notes, summaries, and expositions, a reference to the deeper significance of a poem, he is courteously requested to turn to those sections of the introduction to the book, or of the special introductions, that deal with the moral and religious importance of the poems, their messages to the contemporaries, and their value to posterity.

The author desires to express his grateful acknowledgment to President Frank K. Sanders, Ph.D., of Washburn College, for the felicitous marginal notes that indicate the development of thought; to his colleague, Professor E. B. Titchener, Ph. D., LL.D., for many helpful suggestions on the subject of rhythm; and to Miss Josephine Britton, Ph.D., for her valuable assistance in the preparation of the bibliography and in other ways.

May this book, which it has been a pleasure to write, increase the circle of those who find joy and inspiration in Israel's treasury of song!

THE AUTHOR.

ITHACA, *August* 20, 1910.

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# INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

## I

### THE POETRY OF THE ANCIENT HEBREWS

It is certain that many collections of poems existed in Israel and Judah that have not been preserved to us in the Hebrew Scriptures. Some of these appear to have been quite extensive. The Book of Jashar mentioned in Josh. 10 : 13 and 2 Sam. 1 : 18 undoubtedly contained many poems besides the two quoted in these passages. The Greek version gives in 1 Kings 8 : 53 the words assigned to Solomon in verses 12 f. in a fuller form, and states that they were taken from the Book of Songs. It has been conjectured that the translator was misled by a transposition of letters in his text, the Book of Jashar being originally meant. But there is no evidence of this, and the nature of the poetic fragment is such that it is more natural to suppose it to have come from a book containing songs connected with the temple service. The Book of Wars is quoted as the source of the song introduced in Num. 21 : 14 f. It no doubt contained many others like it. Whether Num. 21 : 17b, 18 came from this collection, as is generally assumed, cannot be determined. The manner in which

the *moshelim*, or reciters of taunt-songs, are cited in connection with the Song on the Fall of Heshbon renders it at least probable that another collection was used in Num. 21 : 27–30, since otherwise there is no apparent reason why the Book of Wars should not again have been mentioned.

David's lament over Saul and Jonathan is so exquisite a piece of poetry that it can scarcely be doubted that this "sweet singer in Israel" composed many another song of distinguished merit. There does not seem, however, to have been any collection of Davidic songs, as the elegy is derived from the Book of Jashar. The text of Amos 6 : 5 is too uncertain to allow a conclusion as to the nature of the songs, if there were any, that were ascribed to David in the eighth century. But in 1 Kings 4 : 32 (5 : 12 in Heb.) it is said of Solomon that "his songs were a thousand and five," and this seems to indicate that such a collection once existed, though nothing of it has survived. An elegy on the death of Josiah is ascribed to Jeremiah in 2 Chron. 35 : 25. Whether it once had a place in the Book of Lamentations, or was found by the chronicler in some other collection, is a question that cannot now be decided. But as the threnodies in our canonical book all refer to the nation, and not to any individual, it is perhaps most probable that the words of the Greek version which seem to represent the original, "Behold it is written in the Lamentations," point to a different book bearing this general title.

Of the oracles in poetic form uttered by the prophets many have been lost. Jer. 36 : 23 tells the story of how a book-roll written by Baruch at the dictation of the prophet and containing all the words Yahwe had spoken to him was destroyed by King Jehoiakim. This roll is indeed said to have been rewritten by Baruch, the prophet dictating again, when many more words like unto the first were added (v. 32). But this roll does not seem to have survived any more than the original one. The only words quoted from it in verse 29 are not to be found in the sections of our present book that have sometimes been supposed by scholars to have come from Baruch's roll. Whatever the nature of the Book of Songs (1 Kings 8 : 53 in the Greek) may have been, there is every reason to believe that hymns were used in the worship at the various sanctuaries before the exile. It is altogether improbable that the songs referred to in Amos 5 : 23; 8 : 3 were of a secular character. They, no doubt, were as religious as the prayers offered, though neither of them may have had the spiritual quality of the best of the later Psalms.

Canticles is not likely to have been the only *diwan* of love poetry. Isaiah attracted attention by chanting the first lines of a popular song concerning the lover and his vineyard (5 : 1); Jeremiah alludes to the songs of bride and bridegroom (16 : 9); maidens sang their marriage songs (Ps. 78 : 63), and loose women their ribald ditties (Isa. 23 : 16). In the vineyard and at the festive board,

drinking songs were sung (Isa. 16 : 10; 24 : 9; Amos 5 : 23; Gen. 31 : 27; Ps. 69 : 12). There were skilled men singers and women singers. Barzillai of Mahanaim refers to them in the days of David (2 Sam. 19 : 35); Ecclesiastes says that Solomon employed them (2 : 8); and Zedekiah had female singers (Jer. 38 : 22). A collection of three thousand wise sayings in poetic form was ascribed to Solomon (1 Kings 4 : 32; 5 : 12 in Heb.). It is now lost. There probably were many little rolls of gnomic poetry.

Much Hebrew poetry would have utterly perished if it had not been to some extent preserved in translations of books rejected by the synagogue, but more or less widely accepted by the church. About two-thirds of the original text of Ecclesiasticus have indeed been recovered, and have made a very valuable addition to the poetic wisdom literature extant in Hebrew. The psalm that follows chap. 51 : 12 is no doubt a late interpolation in the Hebrew text, but none the less interesting. Yet this partial recovery of a work highly esteemed by the Jews of the Talmudic period and often quoted as "Scripture" only tends to draw attention to our dependence upon the Christian versions in the case of a very large number of important books originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic. In 1 Maccabees two threnodies are introduced in the account of the deeds of Antiochus IV (1 : 25–28, 36–40), a lament in the midst of the address of Mattathias (2 : 8–12), an ode to Judas Maccabæus (3 : 3–9), a lament over Jerusalem

(3 : 45), and an ode in praise of Simon (14 : 6–15). In Judith 16 : 2–18 there is a stirring song in praise of the heroine. Among the additions to Daniel in the Greek version, the Prayer of Azariah (3 : 26–45) and the Praise of the Three Holy Children (3 : 52–90) are in poetic form; and so is the Prayer of Manasse (added to 2 Chron. 33). In Baruch there is a didactic poem (3 : 9–4 : 4), two lamentations (4 : 5–8, 9–16), and a long hymn of comfort (4 : 17–5 : 9). The eighteen hymns of the Psalter of Solomon are of the same nature as those in the psalter ascribed to David. There is a prophetic oracle in regular tristichs in the Ascension of Moses (10 : 1–10). In the Apocalypse of Ezra there are many lyrical fragments, such as 4 : 7–8, 23–24; 5 : 4–5, 36–37; 6 : 1–5; 7 : 23–24, 33–36, 37–38, and also longer poetic sections like the prayer and the answer of Ezra (8 : 20–30, 39–42, 52–54), the elegy (10 : 21–24), and the prophecy against the eagle (11 : 40–45). Similarly, there is in the Apocalypse of Baruch a lament over Zion (10 : 6–17), a prayer of Baruch (48 : 1–21), and a prophecy in verse (83 : 10–21). The only poetic insertion in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs seems to be 2 : 6 (Simeon). The Magnificat (Luke 1 : 46–55), ascribed to Elizabeth before it was put on the lips of Mary, the Prophecy of Zechariah (Luke 1 : 68–79), and the Hymn of Symeon (Luke 2 : 29–32) were probably, in their original form, written in Hebrew.

It may not be fair to judge the poetry of the Greek-

speaking Jews by the fragments that have come down to us. If we possessed in its entirety the epic poem, entitled "Concerning Jerusalem," written by Philo in the second century B. C., it is possible that grandeur of conception or wealth of incident might offset the rather unfavorable impression left by the defects of style in the excerpts preserved in Eusebius (*Præparatio evangelica*, IX, 20, 24, 37). The somewhat longer extracts in Eusebius (*ibid.*, IX, 28, 29), and Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.*, I, 23, 155) from a drama by the tragedian Ezekiel, who probably also lived before Alexander Polyhistor in the second century B. C., reveal more power. This drama was called "Exodus"; and Ezekiel is said to have written other dramas. A dramatic literature seems to have developed in Hellenistic circles, having the purpose of bringing home to the Jews the significance of certain epochs in their history, weaning them away from the seduction of pagan plays, and making a wholesome impression upon their neighbors, as Schürer suggests (*Gesch. d. jüd. Volkes*, III,[4] 502). Books III, IV, V, and probably XII of the Sibylline Oracles are the remains of what is likely to have been a very extensive literature in imitation of the inspired utterances of the sibyls. While it is possible that the authors, who lived at various times between 145 B. C. and 235 A. D., incorporated material drawn from the collections ascribed to the Erythræan and Babylonian sibyls, it is certain that the earliest among them were acquainted with such pagan

oracles and copied their style, while they all wrote in an apologetic and missionary spirit. The same is true of the verses written by Hellenistic Jews before 100 B. C. and ascribed to Orpheus, Homer, Hesiod, Linus, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Philemon, Menander, and Diphilus, quoted by Clement on the authority of Pseudo-Hecatæus (*Strom.*, V, 14), by Eusebius (*l. c.*, XIII, 12, 13), and by Pseudo-Justin (*Cohortatio ad Græcos*, XV, XVIII, and *De monarchia*, II–IV). It is evident that, whether they spoke Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek, the Jews in antiquity zealously cultivated the muse, and that large collections of their poetry have either been lost absolutely, or preserved only in fragments, or in often very poor translations.

It is, of course, impossible to affirm that what has come down through the ages is the best of what was produced, and that some masterpieces may not have perished. When it is remembered that only seven plays are extant of the ninety written by Æschylus, seven of the one hundred and twenty produced by Sophocles, and eighteen of the ninety-two dramas of Euripides, and that among those lost were some of the most unique and wonderful creations of poetic genius, as fragments, descriptions, and ancient estimates indicate, the suggestion cannot seem strange that the ancient Hebrews may have possessed poems quite equal, or even superior, to those that, for one reason or another, have survived. But for a curious misunderstanding, rendered possible by current methods of interpretation, the

critical movement that swept out of the synagogue so large a number of important works, once held in high honor, would almost certainly have eliminated from our Hebrew Bible the Book of Canticles. The Book of Job apparently did not encounter such an opposition as Canticles; yet had its true nature been appreciated at the time when 4 Ezra fell outside the breastworks and Daniel was driven from his place among the prophets, it would have been in jeopardy of life. We have every reason to rejoice that these priceless treasures were saved and that so much, besides, of the poetic lore of ancient Israel and Judah has found its way to us.

The poetry of the Hebrew Bible may be divided into the following groups:

I. Hymns in the Psalter and some of the Prophetic Books.

II. A dramatic Dialogue (Job).

III. Love Poetry (Canticles, Ps. 45).

IV. Elegies (Lamentations, 2 Sam. 1 : 18–27, etc).

V. Lyrics inserted in the Historical Books.

VI. Gnomic Poetry (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes in part).

VII. Oracles in poetic form (The Prophets).

The Psalter has been treated in Vol. V of this series, "The Messages of the Psalmists," and some hymns introduced in the prophetic books in Vol. I, "The Messages of the Earlier Prophets," and Vol. II, "The Messages of the Later Prophets." The Book of Lamentations was dis-

cussed in Vol. V, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are treated in Vol. VI, "The Messages of the Sages." The oracles of the prophets have been interpreted in Vols. I and II.

There remain for the present volume the two great masterpieces of Hebrew poetry, Job and Canticles, and some shorter poems found chiefly in the historical books, among them such gems as the Song of Deborah and David's Elegy over Saul and Jonathan.

## II

### GENERAL CHARACTER OF THIS POETRY

It is natural to compare what we possess of ancient Hebrew poetry with the poetic lore of other nations. Without such a comparison it is, indeed, possible to gain an immediate impression of its grandeur and beauty, but what it is, and what it is not, its real nature, cannot be appreciated. Unfortunately, very little has come down to us of the poetry produced by the other Semitic peoples before the establishment among them of Christianity or Islam. If our knowledge of the songs of Israel and Judah is painfully fragmentary, we know scarcely anything at all concerning those that were sung in Edom, Moab, and Ammon, in the Phœnician and Aramæan cities, and by the Semitized Philistines.

Allusions in Hebrew literature render it probable that gnomic poetry flourished in Edom. In Obad. 8, Yahwe says: "Shall I not destroy the wise men out of Edom?" "Is there no wisdom in Teman?" the prophet asks in Jer. 49 : 7; and there probably was good reason why Eliphaz the Temanite should have been chosen as one of the disputants in the Book of Job. Teman was the northern district of Edom, having for its capital Bozrah, the modern Buzeireh. But no sample of Edomitish poetry has survived. The same holds true of Moab and Ammon.

It is possible, however, that we possess specimens of the poetry of a kindred people in the verses of Agur ben Jakeh, of Massa (Prov. 30 : 1), and of Lemuel, king of Massa (Prov. 31 : 1). When these poets lived we do not know. Massa seems to have been located somewhere to the south of Edom. If the ascription is trustworthy, or at least some of these verses originated in the neighboring people whose existence is vouched for by the Babylonian letter K 562, they reveal a marked similarity to the proverbial poetry of the Hebrews both in form and substance. The Bene Kedem in the Syrian desert were also famous for their wisdom, their wise sayings clothed in a poetic garb (1 Kings 4 : 30, Eng., 5 : 10 Heb.); and whether the land of Uz, which lay within the general territory of the Bene Kedem, was nearer to Damascus or to Edom, the author of the dialogues of Job, no doubt, had sufficient knowledge of its people to make the hero of the old folk-tale, who was a

native of that country, the exponent of his most sublime and daring thought, the master of a rich imagination and of a perfect style. But the poetry of the Bene Kedem is lost.

Of no other city, save Jerusalem, did a Hebrew writer ever sing such a rapturous ode as that to Tyre in Ezek. 28 : 12–15. In spite of the denunciatory tone, here and elsewhere, there is an unmistakable admiration for its culture, its wisdom, and its gay life. The oracle, indeed, predicts: "I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be heard no more" (Ezek. 26 : 13), but the prophet continues to linger with evident pleasure upon every feature of the city's greatness. To its music and its songs Isa. 23 : 15 ff. refers. Tyre is like a gay woman who has sung many songs to the accompaniment of stringed instruments in the heyday of her life, and will sing many more, walking about with her harp, in the days when she shall be forgotten by her lovers. Yet she is too good to be lost. She will return to prosperity, and learn to honor Yahwe and care for his servants. The wisdom of Byblos is also mentioned. There can scarcely be a question that the Phœnicians had a poetic literature. Eusebius (in his *Præparatio evangelica*, I, 10) has preserved what purports to be a translation of a Phœnician history by Sanchuniathon, made by Philo Herennius of Byblos, who seems to have been born ca. 64 A. D. Many scholars have supposed that Philo in reality was the author of this work; and it is altogether probable that the euhemeristic interpre-

tation of the myths is due to him. But while the conflicting testimony does not permit us to determine the age of Sanchuniathon, there is no symbolism about his name, Sakkun-yaton, and no good reason for doubting that a work bearing his name once existed. It would be interesting to know whether the rich mythology of the Phœnicians had before his time been treated in the form of an epic. But it would be hazardous to attempt to recover it, after the material has been worked over first by Sanchuniathon and then by Philo. Concerning the Philistines we only know that the Hebrews were very sensitive to their satirical songs, and that at their wedding festivals riddles in poetic form seem to have been propounded (2 Sam. 1 : 20; Judges 14 : 14).

The question whether the poetry of the other nations in ancient Syria equalled that of the Hebrews cannot be answered *a priori* either in the affirmative or the negative. If we were reduced to the inscriptional material, as in the case of the other peoples, the Siloam inscription, the Gezer calendar, and the words on seals, gems, coins, and tombstones would be of far less value than either the Moabite stone, the Zakir inscription, the Hadad and Panamu steles, or the Phœnician inscriptions from Sidon. It was decided by the Pharisees that "sacred books render the hands unclean," necessitating an ablution, after contact with them, to remove the clinging sanctity. Whether we call this superstition, or love, or a mixture of both, the

Pharisaic critics who thus fixed the limits of the canon are entitled to sincere gratitude. We could only wish that they had been a little less thorough-going and radical in their criticism. And would that the other Syrian nations had in a similar manner preserved their treasures, or that they had written on clay instead of on parchment!

For our knowledge of Babylonian poetry we are not dependent upon uncertain allusions in Hebrew writings, but can consult large numbers of clay tablets inscribed with poetic productions of various kinds. There are not only lyrics, penitential hymns, prayers to Shamash, the sun-god, or to other gods, and oracles in poetic form, but there are also epics. Thus we have two epics of creation, the Gilgamesh epic, of which the story of the deluge forms a part, and possibly others. It is doubtful whether the Etana and Adapa myths are told in metrical form. The prevailing metrical structure is the double verse, or tetrastich, forming a strophe, the distich divided into two equal parts, often written with a space between them, each part having two (or three) beats, and the foot being iambic or anapestic. In Assyrian literature, the oracles delivered by the priestesses of Ishtar at Arbela are of special interest. Curiously enough, there seems to be very much more secular poetry in the Hebrew Bible than in extant Babylonian and Assyrian texts. But further finds may change this situation.

On the other hand, pre-Islamic poetry in Arabia is distinctly secular. Imru'l Kais, Harith, Labid, and the other

masters of the century before Muhammad sang of war, wine, and woman, of the camel and the horse, the desert sand and the starry sky. In their poems, honored by the title "al Mu'allakat," we find something of the fierce hatred of enemies that glows in the Song of Deborah, the friendship, faithful even unto death, that gives to David's elegy such pathos, the pride of tribe and clan that is so marked in the Blessing of Jacob, the close observation of the animal world seen in the speech of Yahwe out of the storm in the Book of Job, and the passionate, sensuous descriptions of woman's beauty familiar to us through some of the Canticles. But there are no penitential hymns, like those of Babylonians and Hebrews, no praise-songs, no lyrics breathing the spirit of religious devotion. It is only centuries later that we meet in the greatest poet-philosopher of the Arabic-speaking world, Abu'l Ala al Ma'arri (973–1058 A. D.), with something of the same deep consciousness of the problems of existence, bold radicalism, and moral earnestness in grappling with them, and consummate literary skill in presenting unpopular ideas, that make the dialogues of Job so significant. There is an approach in al Ma'arri's "Letter of Forgiveness," as in al Ḥariri's "Makamat," to the dramatic dialogue. But a true drama never seems to have been produced by any Arabic poet.

The Aramaic poetry known to us consists almost exclusively of religious songs. Such are the baptismal hymns of the Mandæans collected in the Qolasta, such the

Gnostic hymns preserved in the Acts of Thomas, such the hymns of Ephraem, Jacob of Edessa, and others. Some of the songs sung in his youth by the great Sabian poet, Abu'l Ishaq ben Ibrahim, of Harran, in praise of roses, wine, and women, seem to have been written in Syriac; and the translators of Greek poetry may now and then have been imitators as well. But scarcely anything is known of pagan Aramaic poetry, whether from earlier periods or later times.

The Egyptians were a music-loving people. There are numerous pictorial representations of singers and musicians, and frequent references to them in the texts. In view of this fact, it is strange that we should know so little about Egyptian poetry. We have, indeed, some love-songs, occasionally reminding of the Canticles, though quite inferior in delicacy and finish. It is possible that some oracles and proverbial sayings were composed in poetic form, and that a knowledge of the vowels they used with their consonants would reveal to us the poetic structure of some texts that appear to us to be prose. A collection of love-songs in the Coptic, not altogether without merit, shows that such effusions at all times lived upon the lips of the people. But with all the vaunted wisdom of the Egyptians, their literature, extending over four thousand years, cannot boast a single great poem.

If Hebrew poetry is compared with that of the Aryan peoples, a notable difference is at once apparent. These

nations have produced the great epics and dramas of the world's literature. India has not only given us hymns in the Vedas, philosophy in verse, exquisite love-lyrics, but the great epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata, and the remarkable dramas of Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Sudraka, and Sri Harsha; Iran not only the Gathas of the Avesta, reminding, now of the Psalms, now of the prophetic oracles, and the songs of wise Sa'di, Hafiz, and Umar Khayyam, but Firdausi's great epic Shah Namah; Greece, as the very first-fruits of European letters, the Iliad and the Odyssey, the perhaps unexcelled tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and the comedies of Aristophanes and Menander, as well as the dialogues of Plato, the poet among the philosophers, and the idyls of Theocritus and love-songs of Meleager, so constantly reminding of the Canticles; and Rome, besides the lyrics of Catullus, Horace, and Ovid, and the grim satires of Juvenal, exhibiting the moral fervor of a Hebrew prophet, the plays of Plautus and Terence, and the epics of Lucretius and Vergil, not to speak of Lucan, Silius, and Statius. So also modern European literature is ushered in by Dante's epic, the Divina Commedia, and few have been its great poets, however essentially lyrical their muse, who have not sought to express themselves in the epic or the drama.

These are the forms of poetic expression that are lacking in Hebrew literature. Job is not a drama; though it tends in that direction, being a dramatic dialogue. It possesses

no action, which is essential to a drama. Canticles is not a drama, though the *oaristys*, or fond discourse of lovers, is employed in some of the songs. It is possible that this absence of the drama is due to the suppression of polytheism and the private mystery-cults. Were it not for the Krishna mysteries, the Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries, the passion plays and the moralities, we might not have had a Kalidasa, an Æschylus, a Shakespeare, and a Molière. It may be also that it is connected with fundamental psychological traits in the character of the Semitic and Hamitic peoples, since the restraints of a monotheistic reform do not seem to have been felt in early times outside of Israel and Judah, and it is not apparent why the Isis and Osiris mysteries should not have led to an Egyptian drama. Productions of Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria or modern Jews are scarcely of a nature to affect the decision. Similarly, the suppression of mythology may have had something to do with the absence of an epic in Hebrew literature. Yet no one would seriously think of comparing the Gilgamesh epic with Ramayana, the Odyssey, or the Æneid, and the Babylonians had a flourishing mythology. Besides, it is far from certain that these Babylonian epics may not have originated with the Shumerians.

Perhaps the most striking contrast between modern occidental poetry and that of the ancient Hebrews lies in the interpretation of nature and in the character of the love described. There may be a richness of sentiment in "Die

Wacht am Rhein," "La Marseillaise," or "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" that is lacking in the fiercer strains of the Song of Lamech, the Song of Deborah, or the Song of Judith. But the war-songs of the nations change less than do the utterances inspired by the growing appreciation of nature and of love. Peculiar to modern man is a certain tenderness of feeling for the things about him, an absorbing interest in their minutest features, a passion for the beauty of natural objects, a deep sense of the mystery of all that exists, a very real communion with nature, a consciousness of being bound up with it in a common destiny, a fellowship of joy and sorrow, life and death. These characteristics may be due to the departure of the spirits that once hid behind the phenomena of nature, the marvellous rewards of scientific inquiry, the appalling mass of the residue that baffles explanation, the maturing judgment, or the ripening artistic taste. They are felt in all our poetry, from Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio to Goethe, Wordsworth, Victor Hugo, and Meredith; while in most ancient poetry they are absent. Even in Theocritus and the Greek Anthology, in Lucretius and Vergil, in Kalidasa and Hafiz, with all the lingering delight in the painting of the scenery, we miss the distinguishing note, the throbbing passion for nature.

This applies to Hebrew poetry as well. In the earlier poems nature plays no part, unless an earthquake or a thunder-storm is introduced, and it does not interest the

poet for its own sake, but simply because it announces the appearance of Israel's God. The psalmists sometimes enumerate at great length natural elements and objects, but only in marshalling them as an army for the wars of the Most High or in arranging them like priestly divisions for service in the heavenly temple. It is with a naïve, open-eyed wonder that the author of the Speech of Yahwe in Job looks out upon a world where there are so many curiously knit constellations of shining objects in the sky, so many treasuries in heaven of rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, so many wild animals that in some way get their food, so many huge, unmanageable beasts, so many birds that fly, and build their nests, and swoop down upon their prey. What interests him is the contrast between the power and wisdom of God and the insignificance and ignorance of man. Nowhere else is there such an approach to the modern feeling for nature as in Canticles. The glories of the spring, the flower-covered fields, the snow-capped mountains in the north, the wild out-of-doors of Palestine have manifestly touched the poet's heart and fired his imagination. But it is only an approach to the modern attitude; and there is no trace anywhere of the sense of mystery.

The poets of all nations have praised the physical charms of woman and the satisfactions of sensuous contact. Ancient love poetry wellnigh confined itself to such rapturous praise. There is not much difference between

the love described by Kalidasa, Theocritus, and the author of Canticles. The distinct change came with Dante's Vita Nuova. Without neglecting the life of the senses, modern love poetry puts the stress upon the spiritual side. It is the goodness, gentleness, and grace, the intelligence, insight, and wisdom, the patience, loyalty, and devotion of woman that are extolled. Our poets sing the unspeakable joys of fellowship, of a communion between soul and soul in freedom and equality, a tie that binds by common duties and by common interests, a mystic union wrought by mutual self-impartations, a relation implying a free and voluntary sharing of life, but no enforced proprietorship. With the enhanced sense of the worth of the individual through the shifting of emphasis from body to soul, there has of necessity come into modern love poetry a melancholy note. It is not strange that so much of it should be in the minor key. There are the adjustments, more difficult than before, of spiritual attraction and social institutions. All the really bitter cries of unrequited or of hopeless love that have found a voice in the world's literature have been uttered by modern poets. Of all this there is no touch in Canticles. The love of these songs is frankly sensuous, wastes no words on the soul, lifts no wings for celestial flights, lives and breathes near the bosom of earth, is contented, and care-free, and joyous, knows no pain the next kiss will not cure.

There can scarcely be any question that the place of

honor in Hebrew literature belongs to the Book of Job. It is the most wonderful poem produced by any Semitic people. Goethe himself acknowledged the profound influence it had exerted upon him, as did Byron in the composition of his "Manfred." No one would claim that Job is the equal of "Faust" either in literary charm or profundity of thought. But, considering its age and provenience, it is a most marvellous work of poetic genius, and will always hold its position among the noblest utterances in the world's literature.

## III

### FORM OF HEBREW POETRY

#### 1. *The Rhythm*

The essential characteristic of all poetry is rhythm. In poetry, as in music and the dance, the rhythmic impression is due, on the one hand, to objective stimuli that may or may not themselves be rhythmical, on the other hand, to a group feeling arising from the rhythms in the general organs of the body. These organic rhythms are not solely connected with pulse and respiration, since in that case their period would be practically a constant, but with a variety of tension and movement sensations. For the perception of rhythm it is indispensable that the group shall

appear as a unit. A kinæsthetic sensation within the group furnishes to consciousness the unifying element. The groups appear to be separated either by a longer interval, or by a regularly recurring accent, or by both. As the elements constituting the group succeed one another in time, there can be no rhythm without time divisions fixed in a certain ratio. In music, rhythm is produced by amplitude, intensity or pitch, and quality or tone-color of the air-waves. The tone is loud or dull, high or low, of this or that tonic quality.

Poetic rhythm is effected by stress or accent, acceleration or retardation of movement, and grouping. Sometimes there is added to these quantity, or duration of syllables. But the lengthening is without question due to stress, as it has been experimentally verified that the accented syllable always takes more time than the unaccented. In ancient Greek, Latin, and classical Arabic poetry the emphasis was placed upon quantity, so that, in scanning the verse, the usual word-accent was apparently ignored. It should be observed, however, that the accent would ordinarily fall upon a long syllable, that almost necessarily a secondary stress must have been given to an unaccented long vowel in prose, and to an accented short vowel in verse, and that the duration of vowels, theoretically of equal length, can only have been approximately the same. The stress, after all, remained of the greatest practical importance.

With most peoples, ancient and modern, the accent has

been the determining factor in the production of poetic rhythm, rather than quantity. Accentuating poetry does not indicate the groups, and the relations of the time divisions within the group, by a definitely arranged succession of long and short syllables of measured duration, but by the incidence of stress without such measurement. This stress itself does, indeed, give increased duration to the accented syllable, so that the distinction from a more markedly quantitative poetry is not as great as sometimes represented, especially as in scansion the measuring of the time divisions is likely to have been modified by logical demands and secondary stress on the ordinarily accented syllables.

Hebrew poetry is accentuating. The attempts of Gomarus, Jones, and Greve to prove that its rhythm depended on the quantity of syllables as much as Greek, Latin, or Arabic poetry could lead only to failure. They were in part induced by the manner in which Philo, Josephus, Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome had spoken of the metrical system of the Hebrews. Tetrameters, pentameters, hexameters, iambics, dactyls, and spondees were naturally supposed to carry their ordinary meaning in Greek. How far these ancient writers themselves perceived the difference is not altogether clear. Comparison with Syriac led Hare, in 1736, to the idea that quantity did not count, but only the number of syllables which he took to be two in each foot. In spite of Lowth's forcible and on some points

well-considered criticism, it must be acknowledged that this position was of fundamental importance, because it abandoned the quantitative theory and yet was able to recognize the foot as the proper designation of the rhythmic unit. As Syriac poetry in reality accentuates, Merx, Bickell, and others pointed to the laws of versification in the Romance languages which take cognizance of the number of syllables only, but not of either accent or quantity. The Massoretic text and the traditional punctuation possibly suffered too much from a theory that required iambics and trochees everywhere.

The fact that in Hebrew prosody the accent is the determining element was already seen by Anton in 1770, He recognized also that the prevailing feet are iambic and anapestic. Saalschuetz observed the similarity between Hebrew and Germanic prosody, but not the preference of the former for the ascending rhythm. In Ley's system, the arsis, or accented syllable, is given sufficient importance, but the thesis, or unaccented part of the group, is dealt with less satisfactorily. No just conception of rhythm will permit an indeterminate number of unaccented syllables between the accented ones. Duhm, who theoretically considered Hebrew prosody as regardless of the number, position, or length of syllables in the thesis as the German folk-song is, in practice brought to light less irregularity in these respects than he was willing to allow. Grimme felt that the secondary stress on long syllables could not be

neglected, and sought the foundation for a system that should take account of the quantity as well as the accent, in the probable facts of primitive Semitic speech, and in the *moræ*, or smallest time units that may be assigned to the vowels. His system was adopted by Schloegl.

On the other hand, Sievers found himself obliged to reject both the supposed law of the *moræ* and the Massoretic recession of the accent in pause, whether connected with a primitive pronunciation or not. He noticed the ascending accentuation, defined the most frequently employed foot as of the nature of an anapest, spoke, nevertheless, of an "irrational rhythm," and regarded as poetry much of the narrative material that had previously been considered as prose. He is, in the main, followed by Rothstein, who, however, insists upon a more careful delimitation of poetry, and is more keenly conscious of the uncertainty of our present text and the frequent need of emendation. It is the contention of Arnold that Aristoxenus never spoke of an "irrational rhythm." In essential harmony with the great Greek musician, he defines rhythm as "a period of time divided into two palpably commensurate times, sustaining to each other one of three ratios—1 : 1, 2 : 3, or 1 : 2," but agrees with most recent critics that Hebrew poetry is accentuating and not quantifying.

In spite of difference of opinion, there has been a decided advance in the appreciation of Hebrew rhythm. While the results of psycho-physical studies have hitherto

been too much neglected by those occupying themselves with metrical investigations, and the terms used by students of music have not been defined with desirable precision, the comparison with different systems of prosody in ancient and modern times, and the attempts at discovering, by actual scansion, what the laws of Hebrew versification may have been, have not been fruitless, but led to an increasingly clear recognition of its essential nature. The determining factor in Hebrew rhythm is the accent; its prevailing tendency is the ascending one; the rhythmic unity is the foot consisting of two parts, having a fixed ratio to each other; the thesis cannot be made up of more than three unaccented syllables; a secondary stress is likely to fall upon a long syllable in the thesis; the duration of the arsis is not measured, but the main stress of necessity causes a lengthening; the most current feet are iambics and anapests; feet of different nature may follow each other in the same distich and even in the same stichus. The chief works dealing with this subject will be found in the bibliography at the end of this volume.

### 2. *The Metre*

There was a quality in Hebrew verse that caused such men as Philo, Josephus, Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome, who had the opportunity of hearing it read and sung, to use, in describing it, the terms tetrameter, pentameter, and

hexameter, as well as the Greek designations of the feet. If it was not the regular recurrence of long and short syllables in a fixed ratio, it must have been the rhythm-producing stress that gave a similar impression. A distich of three beats in each stichus might often have sounded like an hexameter. But the distich does not possess quite the unity of the hexameter line, and the same foot is not uniformly used. It has, therefore, been proposed to call a line with two main accents binary; one with three, ternary; and one with four, quaternary. A double binary, ternary, or quaternary would, then, be a distich, with respectively two, three, or four beats in each stichus, while ternary-binary would be one with three in the first, and two in the second line of the distich. Perhaps the most convenient method of expressing the number of arses in these cases is by figures such as 2 : 2, 3 : 3, 4 : 4, and 3 : 2.

There seems to be no objection to the use of the ordinary designations for the foot, such as iambic, anapest, pæon, and spondee. Trochees and dactyls apparently do not occur, the mistaken idea of their existence being probably due to a secondary stress on account of vowel-length in some striking instances. The preference for the ascending rhythm is not peculiar to Hebrew poetry, but characteristic of Semitic accentuation. It no doubt depends upon racial or ethnic psychological tendencies. Ettlinger has pointed out that the Greeks called the trochaic the restful (hesychiastic) and the iambic the stirring (diastaltic), and that Bach used the former in the choral, the latter in the gavotte.

### 3. *Parallelism*

The rhythm of sentiment and thought characteristic of Hebrew poetry was called by Lowth *parallelismus membrorum.* It is produced by so arranging the material of a distich or tristich as to make the second line, and, if the parallelism extends beyond the distich, the following line, a repetition in varied forms, a supplement, or a re-enforcement of the fundamental idea expressed in the first line. The thought does not move on continuously from line to line, but returns upon itself, varying, strengthening, and amplifying its content before proceeding on its way. The sentiment does not flow on like a stream, but surges back and forth like the ebb and tide of the sea. Lowth recognized three varieties of parallelism, the synonymous, the antithetic, and the synthetic. When the second line repeats in varied form the thought of the first, the parallelism is called synonymous; when it brings in a contrast, antithetic; and when it furnishes a supplement, synthetic. When the first line is in itself incomplete, and the second takes up words from it and completes it, the parallelism has sometimes been said to be climactic.

This rhythmic movement of the thought is not peculiar to the Hebrews. It is found in Babylonian, Aramaic, and Arabic poetry, and also in the lyrics of ancient Egypt. As to its origin, it has been suggested by Duhm that the earliest improvised verses started in responsive song among the women, the chorus taking up, modifying, and supplement-

ing the thoughts expressed by the leader. This does not seem improbable. But, unfortunately, we do not know whether the custom described is as early as our oldest specimens of parallelism. It is also possible to think of the forward and backward movements of the dance. At bottom, it is due to the same rhythm-producing tendency as the foot in the line; and there is within the distich a thesis and an arsis, as it were, a part that is not accentuated and a part that has the stress.

### 4. *The Strophic Structure*

The introduction by the Massorites of the double point (:), to mark the end of the distich or tristich, has naturally given a somewhat exaggerated importance to what is generally called the "verse." In a form of poetry that demanded the balancing of two expressions of the same thought, or of two phases of the same idea, a monostich of two, three, or four beats is scarcely permissible. The rule is the distich. To express the consciousness of both the separateness of stichi and the unity of the distich, and also to save parchment, no doubt, poetic sections were so written that the whole distich was on the same line, but a space left between the stichi. This led Josephus to speak of pentameters and hexameters, and Grimme to look upon the "verse" as a strophe. In didactic poetry there often seems to be no attempt at strophic structure; the distich

suffices. In lyrics and in prophetic oracles it was natural to go beyond the two lines. The most common type of strophe is the tetrastich, used almost exclusively in Job, Canticles, and the songs considered in this volume. Tristichs are found in later additions. Strophes of six, eight, and even twelve lines are unmistakably indicated by refrains.

### 5. *Assonance, Alliteration, and Rhyme*

In reading some of the poems, one is impressed by the solemn succession of the same vowel sounds throughout the line or distich, or its reappearance in the same place in the various parts of a strophe. This can scarcely have been unintentional. It is an assonance adopted for effect, and often more pleasing and less artificial than that of Spanish poetry. Similarly, there is often a clearly purposed succession of words beginning with the same consonant. As one consonant does not follow another, as a rule, without the intervention of a vowel at the beginning of a syllable, this alliteration is less rich than that in Old Scandinavian and German poetry. Occasionally, rhyme is used at the end of the stichi. It rarely adds anything to the beauty of the verse, and even the poetic oracles of the prophets were saved from the monotony of the rhymed endings characteristic of the Quran.

## IV

### TEXT AND TRANSLATION

#### 1. *The Hebrew Text*

It is the first duty of the interpreter to seek to recover the original text. In the case of the poems dealt with in this volume we are fortunate enough to possess copies in the Hebrew language in which they were written. These copies are indeed late, none being earlier than the ninth century of our era. Thus the Song of Deborah was probably composed more than two thousand years before our oldest extant Hebrew copy was made. But there is good reason to suppose that no important changes were made in the consonantal text from the second century A. D. to the time of our first codices. It is true that before the former epoch the text often suffered greatly in transmission, as the ancient versions show, and those songs that for a long time passed from lip to lip before they were written down no doubt were subject to many alterations. Yet it must not be forgotten that the metrical form was an efficient means of preserving the integrity of the text, while rhapsodists chanted or recited the songs. It may well be that fewer errors are due to the failing memory or intentional variations of reciters than to the ignorance or carelessness of copyists in the days preceding the professional scribes.

Hence our present text may come as near to the original in the earlier lyrics as in Job and Canticles. The Hebrew text preserved by the Samaritans is, with all its numerous variants, a testimony, so far as the songs inserted in the Pentateuch are concerned, to the substantial identity of at least one recension written in the old Semitic script, possibly two or three centuries before our era, and the text established by the later scribes.

Systems of punctuation to indicate the vowels were introduced in the seventh century A. D. They represent the then customary pronunciation, but also the tradition of the past centuries during which the Aramaic had indeed been the vernacular but the Hebrew, far from being a dead language, had been constantly heard in the synagogues and used by the learned. It would, no doubt, be hazardous to assume that David pronounced his elegy exactly in the manner the Massorah prescribes. Dialectical differences and changes from age to age cannot be doubted. Of special importance for the poetic sections is the question whether words having only one vowel, after the original case-endings had been dropped, were in early times and everywhere provided with a helping vowel, whether "earth" was called *'ars* or *'eres*. A fragment of Origen's Hexapla in which the Hebrew text is transliterated gives us *ars*, and not *eres*, as the Massoretic recension. On the other hand, the transliteration in the earliest Greek version shows that these so-called segholates were pronounced

with two vowels. There may have been differences of tradition in regard to this, or dialectical differences in earlier times. The dropping of the case-endings in modern Arabic has also frequently led to the introduction of a helping vowel, sometimes only a murmuring sound, sometimes distinctly emphasized. In reading Hebrew poetry, we are probably justified in following as a rule the direction of the Massorites, disregarding it only when the metre manifestly demands it. The system of accents introduced in the eighth century A. D. to aid in cantillation is not without value, but can scarcely be of high age. Job, like the Psalter and Proverbs, has a particularly elaborate system of accentuation. Yet it is difficult to conceive of Job as having been actually chanted in the synagogue. The Hebrew text, with its apparatus of notes, vowel-signs, and accents, is invaluable. Considering all the circumstances, we possess these poems in a remarkably fine state of preservation.

### 2. *The Ancient Versions*

Some of the early translations of the Bible are also of the utmost value in assisting us to determine what, in doubtful cases, the original text was. Of these the first Greek version is, beyond comparison, the most important. What this version was is indeed at times as difficult to discover as the original it attempted to render. But the codices,

so far as they are available, such daughter-versions as the Old Latin, the Coptic, the Syriac, and the Ethiopic, and the quotations in patristic writers, allow us at least to approach it. In the case of some books the earliest version must apparently be separated from a later recension, generally, though not always, longer, found in certain manuscripts, translations, and quotations. Thus there are two recensions of Job: one earlier and much shorter, and another, of later origin, made to conform to the enlarged Hebrew text; and likewise two of Judges. The original Syriac version seems to have been retouched in most books by later hands familiar with the Greek Bible. Occasionally, though rarely, the Targums are of value in establishing the text. Jerome, prince of translators, followed substantially the same consonantal text that we have. He knew that rhythm and metre characterized Hebrew poetry, but made no effort to give a poetic form to his Latin rendering. It is a delicate task to recover from a translation the original word or phrase. But in numerous instances it has been done in such a manner as to carry conviction. Conjectural emendations are justifiable when demanded by the versions, the metre, or the sense. Now and then a line has obviously fallen out; more frequently additions have been made. Occasionally the ancient witnesses testify that there has been a transposition of lines; but it is not safe to assume such transpositions on a large scale. A new text should not be created on the plea of restoring the old. The

farther afield the critic travels from textual tradition, the less convincing are his operations.

### 3. *The Metrical Translation*

No interpretation is more valuable than a faithful translation. Poetry should be so rendered as to give the impression of poetry, conveying not only the thought but something of the form that characterizes it. The translator must reproduce with accuracy the thought, and at the same time force his expressions into the rhythmic swing and metre of the original. Adherence to the Hebrew parallelism will not permit him to continue through distich and tetrastich the thought, or vary the order of its constituent elements. But if he is convinced that the author before him has put himself under these restraints, and feels that by so doing he has added greatly to the impressiveness and beauty of his message, the conscientious and appreciative interpreter cannot but regard it as his duty and privilege to follow the example set. There is a certain aroma that invariably evaporates, a certain indescribable charm that is of necessity lost, in any translation. But the effort is worth the while, if it gives those who cannot read the Hebrew text, or never have realized its peculiar poetic structure when reading it, a truer estimate of its worth.

There are passages of less distinctive poetic merit where the translator may well be justified in not attempting to

render a metrical translation. In such cases, a carefully made paraphrase is often of very great value. The contents of many a psalm has been admirably brought out in this way in Vol. V of this series. The same method is pursued here in the case of some secondary parts of the Book of Job.

## V

### THE POETS OF ISRAEL

The childhood of the race, like the childhood of the individual, is interested in the story and the song, not in the person who first told the tale or made the poem. Concern about the poet's name and the events of his life is a sign of intellectual puberty. Curiosity and pride find satisfaction in the details of his career. In course of time, critical judgment learns to sift the tradition. Names and circumstances duly vouched for are accepted and invested with a universal human interest, but there is a willingness to forego the pleasures of a knowledge resting on foundations not sufficiently secure. Yet the story and the song no longer can absorb the whole attention as in earlier days. It is the author himself that men again strain their eyes to behold. His name, his looks, his family connections, his deeds, experiences, and social relations may be unknown, and yet his personality stands forth clearly portrayed in his

work, the subtlest qualities of mind and heart revealed, the spirit's inner life unfolded.

Unless there was a special historic reason for remembering the singer, ancient Israel was as unconcerned as any other people about the writers of its songs. "Israel sang" the Song of the Taking of Be'er; "the rhapsodists recited" the Song of the Capture of Heshbon; the Song of the Crossing of Arnon "was recorded in the Book of Wars." This was quite sufficient. It is probable that "Israel sang" the songs of the tribes brought together in Gen. 49 before they were put upon the lips of the dying Jacob. When the reputation of David and Solomon caused men to ascribe to these kings large numbers of hymns and songs, no care was taken to find out who the real authors were. Their names were forgotten, if they ever were known. We ask in vain about the poet who, gazing at the bright Syrian sky, was so impressed by the contrast between the glory of the eternal stars and the insignificance and weakness of the son of man (Ps. 8), the tender heart that voiced its contentment and peace in the immortal song: "Yahwe is my shepherd, I shall not want" (Ps. 23), or the deeply religious soul that sang: "What have I in heaven but thee? and when I have thee, O Yahwe, I care not for heaven or earth" (Ps. 73). We shall never know who the poet was that wrote the exquisite lyrics of Canticles. The interest centred on the reputed authors, and scribes looked with eagerness for the occasions in the life of David when the

hymns most probably originated, and the time in Solomon's career when he was most likely to have sung the Song of Songs. So little concerned was his people about the poet by the grace of God, who produced that marvellous work, the Book of Job, that not until centuries had passed does there seem to have been even an attempt to determine the authorship.

Nevertheless, we possess the names of some of the poets in Israel and Judah. It is possible that we still know by name one of the singers looming up in the gray dawn of Hebrew history. No convincing argument has been adduced against the authorship by Deborah of the triumphal ode in Judges 5. In Judges 4 Deborah is said to be a prophetess. Her husband's name is given as Lappidoth. The author of the prose account states that her home was between Bethel and Ramah. If this is correct, she may have moved to this place from Issachar, for she certainly belonged to this tribe. But there may be a confusion with Deborah, Rebekah's nurse. The seeress summoned Barak to take the lead against Sisera. She was the soul of the movement. Her interest, even in the song, is chiefly in the marshalling of the clans to the fight, and in the results. She probably lived about 1150 B. C.

The most famous, though not the greatest, poet in Israel was David, son of Jesse, king of Judah in Hebron (ca. 1033–1023 B. C.), and of Judah and Israel in Jerusalem (ca. 1023–993 B. C.). Though only two of his poems have been

preserved, one of these is of such superior workmanship that it amply justifies his fame. He was born about 1060 B. C., according to tradition in Bethlehem. In his youth he came to the court of King Saul of Benjamin, as a warrior and a harp player, and in course of time won the friendship of the king's son, Jonathan, and the hand of the king's daughter, Michal. His popularity as the king's armor-bearer and son-in-law caused Saul to suspect him of designs upon his crown, and he was obliged to flee from Gibeah. As the chief of a band of outlaws, he occupied the forts of Adullam and Keilah, became the head of Caleb by the death of Nabal and his marriage with Abigail, but had to take service with the Philistine king, Achish of Gath, and received from him Ziklag. The battle of Gilboa wrung from his heart and lips the lament over Saul and Jonathan, a noble monument of his art and of his generous nature. He welded the various ethnic elements of the south country together into a kingdom of Judah, under Philistine suzerainty, captured Jerusalem, came into possession of Israel through the death of Ishbaal, made himself independent of the Philistines, conquered Moab, Ammon, and Edom, quelled the insurrections of Absalom and Sheba, and left a respectable kingdom to his son Solomon. David was not free from sensuality and cruelty, and committed an outrageous crime against Uriah the Hittite. But he was brave, generous, tender-hearted, and pious, though his songs are of a purely secular character.

Such men as Amos and Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, and the great seer of the exile (Isa. 40–48) were poets as well as prophets. The circumstances of their lives are to some extent known, and have been described in Vol. I of this series. As in the case of Deborah, the mantic and the poetic inspiration appeared together. The visions seen in the trance still stood before the waking eye, the voices heard in the ecstatic state still rang in the soul, the exaltation of feeling, the sense of being possessed gave a rhythmic movement to thought and speech, forced the words into the measured steps of poetry, while the alert intelligence searched the political horizon for signs of divine action, and the quickened conscience discerned the deep-lying causes in the moral condition of the people. What is recorded by Hosea of his own life is particularly instructive in showing how a common experience was sometimes transmuted into oracles of great beauty and far-reaching significance. There was many a man, no doubt, in Israel who fell in love with a woman of the character of Gomer, Diblaim's daughter, a priestess attached to some temple, in all probability. Hosea may have been the only one to read in the beatings of his lacerated heart divine oracles and utter them with a poet's voice. It is worth something to be able to look into the home of an Isaiah, to see his wife, the prophetess, and his children with the strange and thought-provoking names, to watch him as he goes into the temple and falls into a trance, or runs half-

naked through the city streets, or stands on a corner singing a popular love-song whose mirth dies away to give place for the solemn chant of doom, or cuts in a block of stone the large letters of a prophetic name to be a testimony on the day of fulfilment. What we know of Jeremiah's lonely life, the cruel treatment he received, the never-ending persecutions, his unflinching courage, and his unwavering fidelity to what he deemed the truth, helps us to enter more intelligently and sympathetically into the world of thought his inspired lines reveal.

But even when the name is unknown, and the time can only be approximately determined, it is possible to become so intimately acquainted with the poet through his work that the statistics are scarcely missed. In their original form the oracles ascribed to Balaam in Num. 23–24 seem to come from the reign of Solomon (ca. 993–953 B. C.). Pseudo Balaam is a sympathetic figure. It was a genial idea to make King Balak of Moab send for a seer to curse Israel, to transform Balak's contemporary King Belah or Balaam ben Beor of Edom into a prophet, and to put blessings instead of curses upon his lips. What a sense the poet has of the high destiny in store for his people! With what pride he must have looked upon the achievements of David and of Solomon! How splendid is his patriotism! He counts the man happy who is permitted to die in Israel, a member of a just and victorious nation. He sees with genuine poetic imagination the glory of his native land.

Nameless, too, yet better known than any of the others, is the greatest of all the poets of Israel, the author of the Book of Job. No cities vie with one another for the honor of having given him birth, no record tells whose son he was, or if he had a child, no ray of light illumines any part of his career, no monument marks his final resting-place. We may hesitatingly suggest that he was a native of Judæa, had travelled widely, possibly in the desert and in Egypt, was a scholar and a man of distinction, lived in the fourth or beginning of the third century, had read extensively as well as thought deeply, and was not uninfluenced by foreign ideas that came pouring in when men no longer sat undisturbed in the land, since the stranger had settled among them; but all this is only more or less plausible conjecture. As a compensation for this ignorance, his inner life is revealed to us most clearly. The light is almost dazzling at times. With that passionate frankness characteristic of some great natures, he tears out his very heart and lays it bare to us, he opens his mind and lets us look into its deepest recesses. We do not know what happened to him on any day of his life; we know with painful accuracy what questions agitated his mind, what grave doubts rose within his soul, what dark misgivings caused his spirit's anguish, what sorrow placed its heavy burden on his heart. We no longer see the old man, stricken with leprosy, sitting on his heap of ashes, covered with dust and loathsome ulcers. We no longer hear the sages utter their discourses, advance their arguments, present their charges,

arrange their answers in pleasing and impressive form. What rivets our attention is the poet himself, this human soul we understand so well, this bold, intrepid seeker after truth, this fearless critic of traditional views, this eloquent pleader for new vistas, this generous, resourceful nature, so ready to bestow equal care on the elaboration of the ideas he must needs reject as on those with which he sympathizes. His insight is as striking as his style, his pathos as marvellous as his reasoning, his religious fervor as manifest as his defiant radicalism. He often bursts upon a modern reader like a sudden revelation, as does Lucretius, and always holds him firmly. Once he is known, he never ceases to be a vital force in any life.

Entirely different is the poet to whom we owe the characteristic parts of Canticles. He, too, is known to us only through his work; but this work breathes another atmosphere. He is not a philosopher, burdened with the mighty problems of existence. He is a singer whose song has only one perennial subject, and whose heart is moved by only one great passion. How the world fares, why the wicked flourish, what becomes of man when he dies, what is the solution of the riddle of the universe, these things do not concern him. He has tasted of the cup of love, and drank forgetfulness of the world's troubles. Again and again he tunes his lyre, but it is ever the same music. He sings of love; all else means nothing to him. It is not the mighty love that draws together kindred souls, deep calling unto

deep, the overflowing spiritual experience uniting in a common stream. But it is the play of elemental forces in man's nature, the attraction of the human atoms, the never-ceasing work that weaves the web of life in the loom of time. Because love sings in his heart as well as in his canticles, he is in touch with nature. He is almost a modern in his feeling for the things about him, his sense of beauty. There is a certain inimitable delicacy in his treatment of many a theme. He is able to enter into the feminine mind and shows his appreciation of its qualities by allowing it to reveal itself. In monologue or dialogue, he never succeeds so well as when he puts upon the lips of woman sweet words confessing love of man. He very rarely offends our tastes; he almost invariably charms and pleases. It is possible that he lived in the East Jordan country at the beginning of the first century before our era. But of this we cannot be sure.

The poet who sang the Song of Youth and Age (Eccles. 12) may not have hid himself purposely under a Solomonic guise, if it is a quotation or a later insertion in the book. Ecclesiastes himself would probably have looked upon the attempt to perpetuate his name in connection with his serious work as "a chasing after wind," a "vanity of vanities." If he quoted this bit of exquisite poetry to adorn his prose, he may not have known or cared who wrote it; if it was added at a later time, the authorship was probably unknown. But there is wisdom as well as pathos in the song, and the singer is entitled to our gratitude.

## VI

### THE ETHICAL VALUE OF THE POEMS

From the view-point of ethics, the importance of a poetic production may consist in the fidelity with which it reflects a moral sentiment of intrinsic or potential worth, or in the ideal rising above the ordinary level which it suggests. Whether of one kind or another, it is right to set it off, in contrast and comparison, against what appears as a higher ideal; but it is also a duty to judge it according to the standards of its own age and in its relation to the growing consciousness of right and wrong. If a feeling, word, or deed is considered proper and laudable, and is held up to admiring contemplation and approval, though it cannot stand before the bar of an enlightened conscience, this can have only a deteriorating effect upon morals. If, on the other hand, there is no perception of relative values, no recognition of a righteousness that excels in its own environment, while falling below the demands of a more advanced age, no appreciation of the gradual growth of morality, injustice is done to the past, the true perspective is lost, the ethical sense is blunted.

Hebrew poetry has suffered from both of these aberrations of judgment. Sentiments no longer justifiable on any ground have been openly defended, or their propriety

has been tacitly assumed. Deeds that a more sensitive conscience must condemn have been publicly praised or solemnly recounted without the slightest word of protest. Relapses into barbarous modes of thought and feeling have been justified by their harmony with those set up as standards. Or the conceived defects have been eagerly sought out, paraded in disgrace before the eyes of men, jeered at as conquered enemies dragged in chains behind the triumphal chariot of reason, made the excuse for throwing overboard the priceless spiritual treasures of a highly gifted people. Only by a cultivated historic sense and an enlightened moral judgment is it possible to steer a safe course between the Scylla of unthinking approbation and the Charybdis of unqualified rejection.

If the first of the lyrics inserted in Genesis, the Song of Lamech (Gen. 4 : 23, 24), is considered, the fact that it has a distinct ethical purpose is at once apparent. It seeks to show how much higher the respect for life, how much keener the sense of honor was in one tribe than in another. The Kenites are satisfied with taking seven lives for one of their tribe that is killed; the Lamechites set a greater value upon those of their own blood. They exact a life for a mere bruise, and take seventy-seven lives before they can regard the slaying of one of their men as avenged. This is the law of the desert, the crude justice of the nomad. Modern sensibilities are shocked by this thirst for blood. The implied assumption of inequality seems to betoken an

enormous vanity, the exaggerated self-importance appears ludicrous. Civilization has travelled so far since the days of universally recognized fist-right, men are so willing to leave the punishment of crime to society, so loath to shed the blood of any man, so doubtful as to the value of capital punishment, so mollified by the spirit of the gentle Nazarene who would abolish the fundamental principle of punitive justice, the law of retaliation, that it is difficult to appreciate the serious sentiment of the song, to take it as anything else than an empty boast, a playful threat, a cruel jest. Yet on further reflection it must be seen how necessary to the development of well-ordered social conditions the forcible suppression of crimes of violence has been, how indispensable more rigorous measures, more severe reprisals were in the nomadic state, with its tribal organization, its scanty resources, and its constant dangers.

To the author of the Curse and Blessings of Noah (Gen. 9 : 25–27) the enslavement of the Canaanites seemed a most desirable thing. He was willing, at least temporarily, to share the land with the other invader, probably the Philistine from Crete; but the Canaanite must be reduced to slavery. Let the occupants of the soil be driven out of their possessions, forced into servitude, by their kinsmen, the Hebrews, or by the Philistines. Let the former lords be slaves. The singer gives no reason for his fierce imprecation. The idea that the Canaanites deserved their fate, because of their shamelessness in sexual matters, is an

apologetic after-thought introduced in the prose story but foreign to the poet himself. They were in the way; they defended their homes; they were powerful, rich, and cunning. That was crime enough. We look with horror upon chattel slavery, condemn all wars of conquest, and detest as tyranny the exploitation of a subjugated people. Yet we have not left these things so far behind that we can no longer understand, or have the right to look with scorn upon, men who, lashed by necessity or lured by a sense of manifest destiny, rushed in where opportunity presented itself, fought for the prize of victory, and made slaves of those they captured.

The Song of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11 : 3, 4, 7) reveals a melancholy consciousness of the estrangement between nations caused by the diversity of languages, and seeks a cause of this evil in the heaven-scaling arrogance of man and the incalculable strength of a united human race, endangering the power of the gods. Even a vastly different outlook upon life that takes no note of jealous gods, gazes with eagerness into the future for signs of the political organization of mankind, yet views with complacency the varieties of human speech which form no real barriers to union, cannot prevent the recognition of this poet's delicate moral feeling.

In a large number of the poems the most noticeable feature from an ethical stand-point is the patriotic fervor which they breathe. This is true of the oracles concern-

ing Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25, 27), the Blessing of Jacob (Gen. 49 : 2–27), and the songs of the conquest in Num. 21. But it is especially marked in the Blessings of Balaam (Num. 23, 24), and the Song of Deborah (Judges 5). There is much that is laudable and inspiring, and little that one can take exception to, in the enthusiastic utterances ascribed to Balaam. His devotion to king and fatherland is not to be judged by modern ideals of democracy and cosmopolitanism. The Song of Deborah leaves a different impression. With all our admiration for her wonderful art, her splendid workmanship, her glowing style, her comprehensive view and great constructive power, her quickly changing moods, the biting sarcasm and the gentle raillery, the generous praise and the bitter denunciation, the pathos and the exaltation, we cannot help shuddering at the savage delight with which she paints the horrible details of the slaying of Sisera, the utter lack of any sense of shame, the manifest pride and satisfaction caused by the treacherous breach of hospitality, the mean and dastardly assassination of the enemy by Jael's wife, and, more perhaps than anything else, the refined cruelty of the closing picture of Sisera's mother, as terribly effective as it is revolting to our moral sense. Read, however, in the light of the historic circumstances, this triumphal ode saddens us less than many a Te Deum sung in more recent times.

Ethically, one of the most pleasing songs is David's

elegy over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1 : 19–27). The nobility of sentiment voiced in the dirge, beautiful as it is in itself, is greatly enhanced by what is revealed of unexpressed nobility in the singer. To David Saul may indeed have appeared as one possessed by an evil spirit from Yahwe, making him irresponsible for his deeds. Nevertheless, he had suffered at his hands. He had long been an outlaw, and, what was especially bitter, forced by Saul's enmity away from Yahwe's land to worship other gods. Yet there is not a touch of resentment in the song. All is blotted out but the memory of the king's greatness and the grief over his fall. It is this genuine and large-hearted generosity of feeling that constitutes so much of the charm of David's personality and gives such a rich flavor to his poem. When he praises the love of Jonathan as more wonderful than woman's love, we are profoundly impressed with the moral worth of so rare a friendship. Yet we feel also that, with all his wide and varied experience, his knowledge of what woman's love is was exceedingly scant. It always lacked the crowning quality, the real fellowship of soul with soul that Jonathan's love supplied.

The great prophets, before the exile, in their oracles, put the emphasis upon justice, mercy, and humility. The word which they used for "justice" gradually came to be used to designate "vindication," "justification" of his people by Yahwe, through graciously changing its external circumstances, and finally put on the meaning of "alms-

giving," "charity." Their plea for mercy was not unheeded; care for the poor and the needy became a characteristic feature of Jewish life. Most effective, however, was their demand for humility before Yahwe. Resignation under the hand of God, readiness to accept the evil as well as the good, modesty in word and demeanor, abundance in praise, freedom from murmuring that might imply censure, a devout and self-abasing attitude before the Most High, were the signs that the lesson of humility had been learned. It had its moral value and also its decidedly injurious effect. Manhood suffered from it, as the author of Job realized.

The Psalter is impregnated with the moral sentiments for whose dominancy in the life of Israel the pre-exilic prophets are chiefly responsible. One note is almost entirely missing in this hymn-book which occasionally is heard in the prophets, the appreciation of the value of other nations. No psalmist ever rises to the level of the Book of Jonah, or the prophetic oracles in which a glorious future is held out for some foreign nations after the period of punishment shall have passed. Love of enemies is nowhere enjoined in the Psalter, nor is it ever expected that even the pious shall forgive his enemies. In spite of all allowances that should be duly made, a horror creeps over us as we hear one of these worshippers in the divine presence, express his conviction that a man would be blessed who could have the privilege of dashing the little innocent children in the

city of Babylon against the stones. But while the man who cherished such a vile wish in his heart could not have known a very high type of blessedness, he might not, after all, have been so blood-thirsty if a Babylonian infant had been thrown in his way. Possibly even such outbursts of violent passion are less damaging to the moral nature than the attitude of complacent self-satisfaction, of ineradicable self-righteousness, that so often comes to view in these hymns.

The great problem of the Book of Job is not ethical, but theological. None of the fundamental questions of morality are discussed. There is no consideration of its source, or of its essential character, or of its ultimate sanctions. Nevertheless, the book is full of ethical thought, descriptions of the just and the unjust man, suggestions of the ideal. In fact, there are passages in this book which reveal a finer moral consciousness, and higher principles of conduct, than may be seen in any other part of the Hebrew Bible. Notably is this true of the last great speech of Job (chaps. 29–31). The moral demands here laid down are more subtle and far-reaching than those of the Decalogue. The lustful look, the scorn of a slave's right, the slightest disregard for the needs of others, the confidence in wealth or selfish enjoyment of it, the pleasure in the misfortunes of an enemy, the hiding of guilt from the eyes of men, are condemned. While the author nowhere distinctly hints at the possibility of morality being auton-

omous, the arguments of Job tend to make human reason the judge of what is right. More clearly, however, did the poet see that reason must judge the facts which may easily be denied and misconstrued in the interest of a theory. He unquestionably sympathizes more fully with Job's denial than with his friends' affirmation of a direct connection between moral conduct and external circumstance, making the latter an invariable index to character. When he touches upon the idea of survival after death, he never connects with it the thought of punishments or rewards, and he evidently does not accept the idea at all. Perhaps the strongest ethical impression the book leaves is that of the tremendous value set on righteousness.

It is not necessary, in order to assign even a high moral significance to Canticles, to assume, contrary to the natural interpretation of the songs, that they were written for the purpose of recommending marriage, or celebrating married love, or encouraging young people to become engaged. There is not a word about either marriage or betrothal in any of the canticles. The poet sang because his heart was full, because love prompted him, as unconcerned about the lessons he might teach as is the bird that warbles in the sky. Whether it was always the same friend who inspired him, we cannot know. Whether he was ever married, who can tell? He knew what devotion to an object tenderly loved meant; he knew how to depict the never sated yearning of man's heart and woman's;

he knew how to make men feel the eternal mystery of love, the greatest moral force in the world. That is the ethical significance of his work.

## VII

### THEIR RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE

Religion is devotion to the highest. Its outward expressions may change from age to age, and vary with the growth of ethnic and individual life; its essence remains always, everywhere, and in all souls the same. No true estimate of its nature is possible as long as the eye rests solely on its multitudinous external manifestations, the altering creeds and cults, or even the shifting forms of mystic fellowship. Its inner life of aspiration for the ideal, yearning for things that shall abide, wistful peering beyond the bounds of space and time, adoring love of goodness and a sense of sacredness, must be discerned. And in the light that shines from this creative centre of energy and productivity all religious phenomena should be judged. In order to be rightly valued, they must be seen, not only in themselves, in isolation, but in connection with the onward movement that reveals, with ever-increasing clearness, the real nature of religion.

It is proper to inquire how the poetry of ancient Israel affected its religious life, what kind of religious thought and

feeling impelled the poets to sing, and what the impression was upon those who first heard their songs. Our historic sense demands that nothing foreign to the minds of the authors should be read into their lines, that no later ideas and sentiments should be allowed to color the interpretation. It is our first duty as interpreters to live ourselves into the world in which they lived. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to overlook or minimize the religious significance assigned to the poems by generation after generation of men under the influence of dominant conceptions and principles of exegesis which we can no longer accept. It is true of many a poem in the Hebrew Bible that the larger part of its life-work, in shaping human character and inspiring religious devotion, has been accomplished, not by the simple and natural meaning its words, of necessity, carry to our minds, but by an allegorical meaning undreamed of by the author himself yet sincerely enough imparted. In looking for a permanent religious message within the perishable outward form, the modern interpreter has to be on his guard against a similar tendency. He may too easily find what he is seeking. It is his duty, however, to bring to light whatever the poem before him seems to hold of religious promise and potentiality, insight and power.

While in the deepest sense a poem that never mentions anything else than human relations or objects of nature may still be truly religious, it is expedient not to attempt to extract a distinctively religious message from the Song of

Lamech, the war songs in Num. 21, the laments over Saul and Jonathan, and over Abner, and the Song of Youth and Age in Ecclesiastes. Canticles must be included in this group. But the religious importance so long attached to this book calls for a word of comment. From no part of the Bible has mysticism drawn so much nourishment. Whether the love depicted was thought to be that of Yahwe and Israel, Christ and the church, Christ and the Virgin Mary, or Christ and the believing soul, it always appeared to the mystic as the supreme expression of the union of the divine and the human. Hence devotional language has often become redolent with its erotic fragrance, and pious feeling steeped in its fervid imagery. It can scarcely be questioned that the use of its amorous epithets and descriptions, even as figures of speech, to indicate the relations of the human soul to the source of all life has frequently had a tendency to produce morbid spiritual conditions; yet it is equally undeniable that it has often added to religious experience a depth, tenderness, and delicacy that it would otherwise have lacked. One cannot help feeling that Hosea who dared to interpret the relation of Yahwe to Israel in the light of his own unchanging love for Gomer, Diblaim's daughter, contributed at least as much to the cause of true religion as Amos, the stern prophet of doom. That the intimacies on earth that give the deepest joy should be thought fit symbols of the highest spiritual relations is, after all, quite natural. The mystic, however,

is apt to disparage the earthly relations, to shrink from carnal love as from an unholy thing, and, therefore, to repudiate the literal interpretation of Canticles. Thus he misses the lesson he most needs, that in the love of man and woman there is nothing common or unclean, that where love is, there earth and heaven, the human and the divine, have met.

The description of Yahwe's appearance sometimes constitutes the chief religious element. From his mountain home in Edom, Israel's God comes, attended by earthquake and thunder-storm, to the battle-field on Kishon; and his heavenly host, the stars, fight with him against Sisera, in the Song of Deborah (Judges 5). From the same holy mountain in Seir he also arrives in the Blessing of Moses (Deut. 33). In the region of Edom he appears to the seer, Balaam, and forces him to bless Israel (Num. 22–24). To the Sea of Sedges he comes to "overthrow the horse and his rider" in the Songs of Moses and of Miriam (Ex. 15 : 1–18, 21). The idea of a sacred place where a divinity especially manifests its presence has been of great value in the development of man's religious life. A hallowing of some particular spot and some extraordinary occurrence is the means by which a sense may grow of the sacredness of all life and its law-bound course. Of much importance is the fact that Yahwe is free to leave his abode on Sinai to care for his people far away. He who could thus protect his own in early times from Edom's land,

would not in later days leave them fatherless when they were scattered over the earth, but bring them help and comfort from Zion. If glorious things have been spoken of Jerusalem, such as never have been uttered concerning any other place on earth, the very intensity of devotion, the process of idealization, prepared the way for the idea of the divine omnipresence.

In some of the poems there is a distinct note of loyalty to the union of tribes because they constitute the people of Yahwe. Deborah praises, jeers at, or reproves the tribes according to their response to the summons in the name of Yahwe. She fiercely curses Meroz, because its people did not come to the help of Yahwe like men. This patriotism, based on religious motives, comes to view in the Blessing of Moses (Deut. 33), the oracles of Balaam, and many hymns of the Psalter. Just because this uniting bond was from the outset of a religious nature, it was possible for it to survive the nation's fall, to incorporate so many foreign elements, to inspire a cosmopolitanism, more intense and enduring than that of the Stoics. The oracles of the prophets reveal how these true poets, carried on by their conviction that the nation should belong in faithfulness and obedience to its God, and their profound consciousness of his surpassing worth, proclaimed in strident tones the doom of Israel, the utter rejection by Yahwe of his recalcitrant people. Thus the transcendence of the ideal was brought about.

From a religious point of view, none of the other poems rises to the significance of the Book of Job. The history of the past may seem to contradict this statement. For, compared with the influence of the Psalter or of Canticles, that of Job has been very limited. Aside from a few commentaries, manifesting no real grasp of the thought or sympathy with it, the book has scarcely left any trace behind it in Hebrew literature. No great man in Israel seems to have been attracted, shocked, or inspired by it. No recorded utterance of his renders it possible to determine whether it was ever read by Jesus of Nazareth. It was too grand and imposing to be attacked by the scribes. It was read with solemnity and inattention by synagogue and church. Eliphaz and Bildad, Zophar and Elihu, Job and Yahwe all seemed to say the same thing. So little was the nature of the argument noticed that, when Jerome made Job speak hopefully of the resurrection of the flesh, nobody was disturbed by it. "Ye have heard," said James (5 : 11), "of the patience of Job, and the end thereof." That was all they ever had really heard. The story of the heaven-storming impatience of Job, his Prometheus-like defiance of the divine tyrant on his throne, had never reached their ears, or minds. The dialogues were avoided, or made no impression. Men read them, if at all, with a veil hanging over their faces.

It is only in recent times that the greatest poet in Israel has come into his own, and the religious importance of his

work has been appreciated as well as his consummate art. Modern interpreters have observed, with ever-growing wonder and admiration, his noble freedom and deep insight. His questions are those we raise ourselves. What is the seat of authority in religion? Eliphaz answers by referring to a revelation of truth that comes by inspiration in visions of the night; Bildad calls attention to the tradition of the past, the wise sayings handed down from generation to generation; Zophar appeals to the judgment of the many, the decision of the majority. Against this threefold external authority of revelation, tradition, and majority, Job protests, and makes his appeal to the facts of life as seen and judged by himself. At bottom these are the answers we would give ourselves. Radical as is the difference between Job's position and that of his friends, there are important elements of truth embodied in the contentions on both sides. It is true that there is a gradual unfolding, a progressive revelation to man's maturing mind of life's meaning, and that there is a prophetic order drawing the veil aside, mediating between the light of universal life and the ignorant and inert mass of men. Only, this is an impartial revelation ever offering itself to the human mind, and its prophets are of every age, and race, and nation. There is a tradition, an accumulation of experience and observation, a stock of knowledge increasing through the ages, presenting itself as a very real help in the interpretation of life. Yet, the material must be sifted, doubt is a

necessity, infallibility is precluded, progress imperative. The truth rests most securely upon the convinced judgment of the many, and is most efficient when it has become part and parcel of a people's consciousness. But it is never found without an alloy; the absolute truth eludes our grasp; there must be room for the removers of the alloy, the bearers of new truths. Humanity, as Mazzini said, is God's prophet on earth. Closely and reverently should the individual listen to this mighty voice.

But even this voice can make its appeal only to the sovereign judgment of man's reason. Here Job's position is incontestable. It happens every day that one man is in the right against a world in error. Mankind never quite makes up its mind, it has a long time to live, and never speaks its last word. Man, born of woman, is of few days, must take quick impressions, cull from the mass objects of special attention, get his answers to a thousand questions, constantly revise his opinions, yet shoulder the responsibility and deliver his final judgment ere he passes into the silence. Nevertheless, it is his duty to see with his own eyes, not to blink the facts, or misconstrue their manifest meaning, in the interest of harmony with external authority, to settle every matter, in humility and subject to revision, yet firmly and with confidence, before the court of his own reason.

Another question that has through all ages agitated the mind of man is that of sin. The fundamental position

maintained by the friends of Job is that the universe is ordered with reference to human righteousness so that health, wealth, honor, and numerous progeny are tokens of inner rectitude approved by God; while sickness, poverty, disgrace, and childlessness are signs of inner corruption visited by God's anger. Sin is the determining factor in the government of the world. If the lightning that strikes a man's house does not bring punishment for an overt act of transgression, it may be the penalty for a cherished purpose to do wrong, or a preventive measure to check evil tendencies of the soul, or a trial testing man's loyalty to God and abhorrence of sin. In any case it is, like everything that happens to a man, closely connected with his moral condition. Against this doctrine of retribution, this theory of a perfect adjustment of moral attitude and physical condition, Job marshals the facts of experience in vehement protest. The doctrine is based on a false generalization. The theory is belied by common observations, by well-authenticated and undeniable occurrences. The forces of nature operate in heedlessness of moral qualities, overwhelming the good and the bad, preserving the just and the unjust. Pestilence and death ask not whether a man is a sinner. The forces operating in society often bring security and coveted good to the unscrupulous, self-seeking, shrewd, and overreaching, while crushing the conscientious, modest, generous, fair, and brave. Outward circumstance is not a reliable index of character.

Again it must be felt that the whole truth is neither on one side nor on the other. It was observation of the facts of life, and not a theory, that first led men to the assumption that a perfect retribution is made between the cradle and the grave. The pragmatism of the historical books that made foreign oppression and other calamities the immediate results of apostasy from the supposed ancestral faith, independence and prosperity the direct consequences of a return to proper loyalty, was ultimately based upon actual observations that seemed to point to this conclusion. There can be no doubt that persistent disregard of the laws of health, overindulgence of the appetites, the unrestrained play of the passions, and wrong relations between man and man, tend not only to the deterioration of character, but to disease, poverty, sterility, and premature death; while a proper cultivation of the moral qualities tends to strengthen the organism against all hostile attacks and insure the general welfare. In the long run, unwholesome social conditions and a perverse public policy will unquestionably ruin a people, while righteousness exalts a nation.

But the generalizations of the friends of Job are at fault. There are many factors with which man's conduct has nothing to do that are left out of consideration. One is heredity; another ignorance of nature's laws, and consequent inadequate adjustment to her elements and forces; and still another an imperfect social organization. How far even the greatest improvement in the inheritance trans-

mitted, in scientific knowledge and the power based on it, and in social conditions, would avail to eliminate all evils not due to moral obliquity, is impossible to say. Decay and dissolution have the appearance of being as necessarily inherent in the nature of things as birth and growth. Death reigned in our terrestrial world millions of years before there was a human being here to weaken, by his errors of ignorance or wilful transgressions, the cords of life; and in celestial space, solar systems are born, live their allotted time, and die. Extended into a principle of universal application, the thesis of Eliphaz and his colleagues is absolutely untenable; it is condemned by facts no man can honestly deny.

To escape from a position that could no longer be maintained, and has indeed been abandoned by earnest and thoughtful men everywhere, a refuge was sought by many in the conception of a future life. The popular belief in a shadowy existence, if such it could be called, after death, in the subterranean Sheol, or hell in the sense in which this word was first used as a designation of the future abode of all the dead, had no bearing on this great problem, since it did not involve any moral distinction, any adjustment of condition to character, any rewards or punishments. But the idea that man might be called back again into real life from the nether world, his spirit clothed upon with a new garment of flesh, rendered possible a squaring of accounts, a future retribution. The relief this

thought has furnished to millions of minds, troubled by the prosperity of the wicked and the sufferings of the righteous, makes it all the more significant that no party in the Book of Job makes any appeal to it. The friends never allude to it; Yahwe himself never touches it; even the Elihu speeches make no reference to it; and Job repudiates it. There is a deep pathos in the words of Job upon this subject. He thinks of God as yearning to look once more upon the work so curiously wrought by his own hands and then destroyed. He thinks of man as waiting through long vigils at his sentinel's post in hell, till God's wrath be spent, and the welcome summons heard calling him back to life again. Just how his fancy pictured this return to life, whether with the old body restored, a new body, or no body at all, is not intimated. The Persian doctrine of a resurrection of the flesh may already have been preached in the land; or the idea of blessings or sufferings in a life beyond the grave, presented in the Greek mysteries, may have become familiar, if not the speculations concerning the nature of the soul, implying its immortality.

The important thing is that he resolutely brushes it all aside as an illusion, refuses to shift the argument to a ground where assertion cannot be met by evidence. There is a marked contrast, however, between the utter indifference of the friends to such a new idea and the intellectual hospitality of Job. He feels its attractiveness, places himself sympathetically at the new point of view, allows him-

self to be buoyed for a moment by this "hope of man," and only rejects it as his passion to see the truth clearly whatever it may be forces him back upon the inexorable facts. In this he anticipates to some extent the modern attitude, with its willingness to be convinced, its readiness to weigh each proffered evidence, its sympathy with every serious attempt to penetrate the mystery of death, its sense of the great worth of the individual, and with its not less characteristic aversion to every species of pleasing self-deception, its distrust of loud affirmations or of whispered intimations fathered by the wish, its refusal to resort to the wholly unknown for an explanation of the partially known, and its grim determination to abide by the facts.

The deepest problem of the book, however, is that concerning the nature of God. It exists only for Job. The friends are not even conscious of it. What is knowable of God, they know. Before the mysterious residue they bow in satisfied and incurious worship. They allow no question to arise that will "disturb devotion before God," nor any doubt that will undermine what they suppose to be religion. Perfect in power and in wisdom, God should be the object of reverent fear and adoration, not of scrutinous inquiry and outspoken criticism. The king of heaven can do no wrong. He does what he pleases, and what he pleases is right, however wrong it may appear to man. It is man's duty to kiss the rod that strikes him, acknowledging that he deserves all the punishment he receives, and his

privilege to accept with gratitude God's favors in the happy confidence that they are bestowed only as a reward for approved goodness. God is the perfect being to whom no imperfection must be ascribed, an ideal fixed and well-defined, known to the fathers, and remaining the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Communion with God is the highest joy.

To Job, on the other hand, the contemplation of God is the source of all his mental suffering. His conscience does not accuse him of any sin commensurate with the horrible fate that has befallen him. He claims no sinlessness, no freedom from the errors of youth, or the failings common to all men. But he has committed no crime to be punished by this awful affliction, this death in the midst of life, this premature end. The God who treats him thus is, therefore, in the wrong. His case is not the only one. Observation shows countless instances of wickedness that remains forever unpunished, and virtue that never receives its reward. This God of the friends who unfailingly deals out just retribution does not exist. The God who actually sits upon the throne of the universe has power and knowledge to carry out any plan of his, but is not just, and fair, and good, as even a man may be. The consciousness of this fills Job with pain. He would convict his divine enemy of wrong-doing, but the methods of this foeman inspire him with no confidence. The real cry of his burdened soul is: "Would that there were another God!" But this is not

like turning from one god to another in a pantheon. He lives in a monotheistic society, where everybody worships one God, the Almighty, the creator of heaven and earth, who reveals himself in all his works, through words and deeds. It is this God who gives no satisfaction to the mind and heart of Job. A reaction against the current conception of the divine being no doubt led some of his contemporaries to the position that there is no God at all. It seems at first strange that he did not himself draw the same conclusion. Between the God of the friends whom he has rejected as an unreality, a figment of their brains, and the God of things as they are, whom he has denounced as a monster, and in whom he certainly could not repose a sincere religious faith, it is remarkable that his belief in a divine being at all should have survived.

Out of the depths he cried for a higher divinity, and it appeared. We catch glimpses now and then of the new God-conception which he builded with the material his experience furnished. It is a God who sees things as they are, watches with sympathy, and bears truthful witness, who rights the wrong in his own accepted time, and gives inner assurance to the guiltless of his divine approval, even in the midst of seemingly accusing external circumstances. The process was similar to that by which Marcion was led to think of the Demiurge, the God of the Jews, and the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ as two distinct divine beings. The earlier thinker, however, did not attack the

current view, propounded with the authority of revelation and tradition, because it presented a low and unworthy conception of the Deity, but because it suppressed, denied, and falsified obvious facts in order to ascribe to him a system of government supposed to do him honor. He did not substitute a God of love from whom in a descending order of excellence lesser spirits emanate, but having disrobed of his divinity the ruler of this world, as well as shorn of all reality his hypothetical rival, he proclaimed a God of justice, of whose approval or disapproval the unfailing indication is not to be found in outward circumstance, but in the testimony of conscience. Thus came the return from the realm of reality, where there are no gods, to the realm of the ideal, where their home is. But thus was secured a higher ideal than that of the friends. The chief religious gains were the demand that the supreme object of worship shall have moral excellence as well as wisdom and power, the shifting of emphasis from the external to the inner experience, and the freedom of inquiry, criticism, and choice between divergent conceptions of the source of life, the ultimate reality.

These gains would have been more marked if greater attention could have been given to the book in the ages that have passed since its composition. To-day it stimulates and inspires us, as perhaps no other work that has come down from Hebrew antiquity, in our search for the sources and criteria of truth, the law of compensation by which a

closer accounting seems to take place than men have ever imagined, the ways in which, if a man dies, he may still live, and the relation of our highest personal ideals to the laws observable, and the forces operative, in the life of nature. The religious significance of the Book of Job is in its way as great as that of the prophetic oracles.

# THE BOOK OF JOB

# THE BOOK OF JOB

## I

### INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JOB

#### 1. *Its Position in the Wisdom-Literature*

The Book of Job belongs to the Hebrew wisdom-literature. In spite of far-reaching differences, it is a fruit of the same spirit as Proverbs, Ecclesiasticus, Ecclesiastes, the Wisdom of Solomon, the sayings of Menander, 4 Maccabees, and parts of the letter of Aristeas. All these works have certain characteristics in common. The contrast between Israel's God and the gods of the nations is no longer in the foreground. Monotheism has become an absolute achievement. There is scarcely even a warning against idolatry. The thought is not occupied with cultic performances. It is not felt to be important to enjoin upon young and old the duty of worship. The special relation of Israel to God, and the consequent glorious future awaiting the people, do not engage the attention of these writers. Even the proper name of Israel's God is seldom used. The interest is universally human. It centres in the fate of man, his duty and his destiny, not in the peculiarities, vicissitudes, and hopes of a particular nation. There

is a nascent tendency to speculation, and there are indications of the presence of disturbing foreign thoughts and customs. Above all, the emphasis lies upon the moral duties, the course of conduct that will lead any man to a happy and honored life.

Not one of these works can be called, in a strict sense, philosophical. The methods of reasoning are not those characteristic of philosophical thought in India, Greece, or the modern world. But the material of all philosophy is dealt with, the problems are to some extent felt, new paths are sought independent of religious authority. The practical necessities of education no doubt accentuated the movement of thought. The young had to be taught principles of righteous conduct. Rules of good behavior were laid down. Wise sayings, embodying observations of life calculated to enforce the moral demands, were gathered together and frequently repeated. Such collections of earlier days may in part have survived in the later books we possess. But the pedagogic interest tended to shift the perspective, and unconsciously lead the mind to a new range of inquiry, troublesome doubts, tentative solutions, and in general a more secular attitude. The determining factor was the historic development, the nation becoming a part of the great Persian and Greek world-empires, and coming especially under the influence of Hellenistic thought. This foreign impact is unmistakable everywhere in Hebrew wisdom-literature.

While the books written by Egyptian Jews in the Greek language naturally show most of this Hellenistic influence, it is by no means absent in works produced by Jews in Palestine writing in Hebrew or Aramaic. The chronologically fixed point in all this literature is Ecclesiasticus. Jesus, the son of Eleazar, of the family of the Siracidæ, cannot have written his part of this work much earlier than 180 B. C. His son Simeon, probably the author of the Ode of Famous Men (chaps. 44–50), belonged to the Maccabaean age, and his grandson who translated the whole work into Greek came to Egypt in 132 B. C. Compared with this book, both in respect of language and thought, Ecclesiastes is decidedly the younger, Proverbs apparently somewhat older, though still undoubtedly within the same Greek period. The other works are all later. It is in this group of literary productions, far removed, in spirit and form, from the ancient prophets, or the Law, that the Book of Job has its place.

### 2. *Its Poetic Form*

So far as rhythm, parallelism, metre, and strophic structure are concerned, the Book of Job does not differ essentially from the rest of gnomic poetry. There is indeed a beauty of diction, a wealth of imagery, an exaltation of feeling, a rhythmic swing not found anywhere else. But these are peculiarities distinguishing one poet from

another, though they use the same general form. On t
other hand, there is in this book a certain unity not seen
any other. Prologue and epilogue have led some studen
to the idea that it is an epic. Yet this notion is preclud
by the dialogues; and it can at most be designated as t
Epic of the Inner Life, as Genung has called it. T
poetic form is evidently not that of the epic. The di
logues have caused some writers to describe the book as
drama. In so far as the sentiments are not presented
the author in his own name, or as expressions of his ow
mental state, but put upon the lips of his heroes,
appropriate manifestations of their feelings and points
view, these speeches seem to have something of a dr
matic nature. But a series of dialogues is not sufficient
constitute a drama. The most essential thing in this for
of poetry is the progress of action; and in the dialogu
of Job there is no action. So far as there is any progre
of events in the book at all, it is exclusively found in t
prose narrative, partly prefaced and partly added to t
dialogues. In the speeches of Job and his friends t
situation is exactly the same from beginning to end. Ev
if there were such a thing as a drama of intellectu
struggles not leading to any complications in life, it wou
still, to be a drama in any sense, have to reveal a progre
of thought, a deepening plot of mental problems attackir
the soul, and some solution. But there is no such advan
from discourse to discourse, from cycle to cycle in the

dialogues. The intellectual situation is as unchanged throughout as the external. The same ideas are repeated, with pleasing variety, to be sure, but without any appreciable movement of thought either toward a culminating point of mental bewilderment or in the direction of a final solution. It is true that the repetition itself and the variations give an increasing sense of the terrible character of the problem, and of all it involves, and also that there is a growing demand that the Most High shall justify his ways with Job. But of a dramatic complication and a real denouement there is not the slightest trace. If it is argued that in "Prometheus Bound" there is, in a similar manner, a practically unchanged situation, with reflections from different points of view upon the hero's condition and what it signifies, and without a marked advance either in thought or action, it must be remembered that this drama only formed a part of a trilogy given at the same time, and that what little we know of the last two parts is sufficient to indicate in a general way the onward march of events.

The Book of Job has been compared with al Hariri's "Makamat," or "Assemblies." The recurrent dialogues between Abu Zaid and al Harith, in poetic diction, rhythm, and rhyme, offer indeed some similarities. How far back this form of poetry may go among the Arabs is difficult to say. It was already used by al Hamadani, who died in 1008 A. D., more than a century before al Hariri wrote his work. But Greek literature was already known at that

time through Aramaic translations, and Persian influence had also been felt at Bozrah.

It is, in all probability, to the same Greek influence that the dialogue form in Job is due. No sooner had Greeks established themselves in Egypt or the Syrian cities than they built for themselves theatres and had performances of their great tragedies and comedies. Even those who never attended the theatre, or could have understood the language, would be able to glean much information concerning the use of the building and what was done on the stage. The dialogue had been used for the purpose of presenting philosophic thought pre-eminently by a great Greek thinker, who was also a poet, Plato. The fact may well have been known, even though the dialogues of Plato had not been read. The greatest Semitic poet, by adopting this form, probably approached nearer to the drama, without reaching it, than any man of genius this family of nations has produced.

### 3. *The Prose Story*

A narrative in prose forms the introduction to the book, and another closes it. The prologue (chaps. 1 and 2) and the epilogue (chap. 42 : 7–17) unquestionably come from the same hand. They are the only parts preserved of the old folk-story of Job. It is evident from 42 : 7 that this story once contained speeches made by Job, his three friends, and Yahwe, but also that these speeches must have

been very different from those which we find in the present book. In the passage quoted, Yahwe says to Eliphaz: "My wrath is kindled against thee and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job has." He thereupon commands them to take seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to his servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for themselves. If his servant Job will intercede on their behalf, he will, for his servant Job's sake, pardon them, and not deal with them according to their folly. It is only necessary to read the present dialogues to see how utterly impossible it would be thus to characterize the attitude assumed in them by Job and his disputants. There the friends speak with utmost reverence of God, maintaining that he is always just, as he is powerful and wise. Whatever a later thinker may find to criticise in this pious and naïve confidence, in this placid and easily satisfied orthodoxy, there certainly could have been nothing in their discourses ringing with the praise of God to provoke serious dissent on the part of the author of the prose story, or cause the God he worships to rush against them in burning wrath in order to take their lives. On the other hand, how could he possibly have bestowed such an unqualified approval on the Job of our dialogues? His is a patient Job, who suffers without complaint, murmurs no word of criticism, voices no question or doubt; theirs is an impatient Job, full of anger and resentment, complaint and censure, never mincing his words,

charging God with being a tyrant, denying his justice, fairness, and mercy, making it a special grievance against him that he pays attention to "the words of the despairing which are but for the wind." To a profounder mind this storm and stress of turbulent thoughts, unrestrained passions, and reckless words may betoken the yearning of an earnest soul for a God higher than that worshipped by the crowd. But how could the author of the original story, who cares so deeply for propriety of speech, that he substitutes a euphemism for a bad word even on the lips of Job's wife, and is so vitally concerned about sacrifices, regard this Job as having spoken the thing that is right of God?

In the original story, the friends, ignorant of the wager in heaven, probably angered Yahwe by ascribing to him, and to wrong motives on his part, what in reality was due to Satan's impudence and Yahwe's jealous love of his servant; Job probably maintained his patience in suffering, his gentle submission to the will of Yahwe, and his cautious care never to speak a word of complaint or criticism; and Yahwe, out of the storm, thundered his disapproval, not of Job, but of his friends, before he was willing to grant them their lives after Job's intercession on their behalf. This author used unhesitatingly, like the Judæan writer in the Pentateuch, the name of Yahwe, even when it had to come from the lips of non-Israelites, as we see from the parts preserved; while the younger poet carefully avoided it, and used such, to his mind, more appropriate names as El,

Eloah, Elohim, and Shaddai. The former found in the suspicion of Satan the cause of Job's suffering; the latter took no notice of this. The patience of Job in the prose account contrasts strikingly with his characteristic impatience in the dialogues. The righteous, so the earlier writer thinks, may in exceptional cases suffer as though he were unrighteous, but this can only be incidental, and in the end he will be amply rewarded; while the poet apparently sees no necessary connection between piety and prosperity, and does not even regard the suffering of the righteous as a trial of his piety. It is not only the name of God, but the whole conception of the divine being, that is different in this earlier story from what it is in the dialogues. Somewhat puzzling is the absence in the epilogue of any reference to Satan's discomfiture, or to Job's wife. They are perhaps more likely to have been removed than forgotten.

### 4. *The Dialogues*

The part of the Book of Job to which its importance is chiefly due extends from chapter 3 to the end of chapter 31, with the exception of some interpolations to be noted below. It contains: (1) Job's lament (chap. 3); (2) a first cycle of discourses by Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, and after each the answer of Job (chaps. 4–14); (3) a second cycle similarly arranged (chaps. 15–21); and (4) a third in the same order (chaps. 22–31). There are, consequently,

in addition to the opening lament, eighteen discourses. Job speaks ten times, each of the friends three times. These speeches have sometimes been called monologues, on account of their length, and because they have more of the nature of formal discourses than of conversations, with quick repartee and rejoinder. They certainly make a different impression in this respect from that of the Platonic dialogues. Nevertheless, the whole structure of the poem shows that dialogues were intended. Each speech by one of the friends is answered by Job, and each speaker begins by a reference to what has been said immediately before, even if he is soon carried away into his own groove of thought. Job's speeches are as a rule longer than those of his friends. His last summing up is more extensive than any of the others, and deeply impressive. The friends begin better than they end, and their last utterances are shorter and less important than their first. It would be wrong, however, to infer from these facts that the author is unwilling or unable to do justice to the arguments of the friends. Considering that his sympathies are clearly with Job, it is an indication of his intellectual strength as well as of his artistic sense that he lavishes so much care upon their discourses. He makes them no men of straw, but the earnest, resourceful, and eloquent defenders of their views. It was evidently his purpose to give to each of them a distinct character, and this is well carried out in the first cycle, somewhat less carefully in the second and third.

The friends represent substantially the stand-point of the prose story. But there is more maturity of judgment. The almighty, omniscient, and absolutely just being whom they worship is not influenced by the slanderous insinuations of a Satan, does not have to inflict the most horrible sufferings on a human soul in order to find out whether it will remain true to him, is not so regardless of everything else but his own glory, his own wounded self-esteem, as to be willing to sacrifice to it his faithful servant, or to be even temporarily unjust in dealing with him, is not ready to shift the responsibility, in the slightest measure, to the shoulders of a subordinate. He knows what will happen; he does what he pleases, and does it himself; but what he pleases is always just, fair, and merited by man's righteous or unrighteous course of action. External sacrifices do not count for so much. It is by a quiet, devout, submissive, and resigned attitude that a man becomes pleasing in the sight of God. This is the spirit that breathes in practically all Hebrew literature.

Job, on the other hand, has a decidedly un-Hebraic stamp. There is none like him in the Jewish world. Occasionally one thinks of the author of the Apocalypse of Ezra, Paul, Uriel d'Acosta, Baruch Spinoza, or Heinrich Heine. But the resemblance is distant. None of these has so foreign a look. In spite of the often wider reach of their thought, none of them ever departs so far from the position characteristic of the Hebrew mind. Among other Semites,

there are two who remind us to some extent of the author of the dialogues. One is Abu'l Ala al Ma'arri, whose independence of authority, deep insight, unabashed frankness, and poetic genius naturally call for a comparison. But, after all, the resemblance to Lucian is far more striking, and that sufficiently indicates the difference. The other is the unknown Babylonian who apparently some time before the reign of Ashurbanipal (668–626 B. C.) wrote the elegy of Tabi utul Bel, king of Nippur (Rawlinson, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, IV, No. 60; cf. Zimmern, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, pp. 385 f., and Morris Jastrow, Jr., *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*, 1906, 9 Lief., pp. 120 ff.). Like Hezekiah, king of Judah, Tabi utul Bel is said to have been sick and to have recovered from his illness, and as in the case of Hezekiah (Isa. 38 : 10–20), so in that of Tabi utul Bel, a poet put upon the lips of the king an appropriate utterance comprising a plaintive description of his sufferings and thanksgiving for recovery. If the illness, the evil demon bringing it about, the disrespect shown to the stricken man, the restoration and its rich rewards cause us to think of the prose story in the Book of Job, there is a certain protest of innocence and complaint of suffering that remotely recall the figure of the Job of the dialogues. But the protest is so gentle, hesitating, deferent, and mild-mannered, and the complaint so clearly directed against the wicked demon, and not against the god, that the most distinguishing feature of

the Jobeid is absolutely lacking in the Babylonian poem well designated by its title as "Praise of the Lord of Wisdom."

There is only one great work in the world's literature that really resembles Job, and that is the "Prometheus Bound" of Æschylus. In both there is the same reckless, scornfully indignant accusation of wrong hurled by the hero against the tyrant on the throne of the universe, the same defence of the supreme god by friends, the same advice not to offend with the tongue, the same impatience with what is felt on either side to be a mere tempest of empty words, the same emphasis upon the hero's righteous character and benevolent deeds. So great is the similarity between the two titans that it is easy to forget that Prometheus is a god, Job only a man, that Oceanus is more friendly than Eliphaz, though not less ready in the end to side with power, the chorus gentler than Bildad, though not a whit less insistent upon respect for tradition and authority, and Hermes a divine lackey, and not a blustering human spokesman of the god of the present order and the majority that worships him, and that Prometheus suffers because he has brought fire and the arts of civilization to man, while Job suffers as experience has shown that in this world of ours any righteous man may do. Still more marked is the difference that Æschylus went on to write "Prometheus Loosed," while the author of the dialogues leaves Job under his affliction, but defiant and proud to the end.

Nevertheless, these two works are so much alike that the thought of dependence naturally suggests itself. If such there is, it can only be on the part of the Hebrew poet, and would not detract from his originality any more than the dependence of Goethe and Byron on Job for some motives. It is by no means necessary, however, to suppose that the author was familiar with the Greek, or had ever seen the play of Æschylus. Stories passed from people to people as soon as they came into more frequent contact. The recent finds of Aramaic papyri on Elephantine have shown how the Achikar story had found its way to the little Jewish community on that island. That of Prometheus would naturally be told in Syria or Egypt after the days of Æschylus in the form he had given it. The Greek-speaking Jews formed the connecting link between Hellas and Palestine. There is no real reason to doubt the substantial accuracy of the anecdote told by Clearchus of Soli (*Frag. Hist. Græc.*, ed. Didot, II, 323), according to which Aristotle gave his disciples an enthusiastic account of his meeting with a Jewish philosopher who was "Greek not only in speech, but in soul." Such men may at times have passed on many ideas as well as stories to their Aramaic-speaking co-religionists. If the figures of the titan on his crag defying Zeus and his friends defending the god had once a chance to present themselves to our poet's mind, his own experience with a more urgent and practical problem of life and his imagination would readily suggest the idea of

casting the Job of the popular legend into the heroic mould of a Prometheus. But whether or not there is, even to this extent, a dependence, the two masterpieces are fruits of the same spirit.

### 5. *The Addresses of Elihu*

In the prologue only three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, are mentioned; and in the epilogue only the same three friends. The original story, consequently, did not refer to a certain Elihu, the son of Barachel, the Buzite. In the dialogues speeches by the three friends alternate with discourses made by Job, but Elihu is never mentioned. In chap. 32 : 1 ff. he is introduced as a younger man who had waited to speak, but no longer could restrain his wrath against Job because he had made himself more just than God, and against his friends because they had found no answer. There then follow four addresses, on the cause and purpose of suffering (chap. 33), the divine justice (chap. 34), the apparent unprofitableness of piety (chap. 35), and the desirability of submission to the merciful, just, and irresistible rule of God (chaps. 36 f.). In language, style, and thought they differ from the dialogues, and evidently come from a later and inferior writer. He has so little of importance to add that his pompousness and self-conceit border on the ludicrous. Bruno Bauer sought, indeed, to interpret this as intended by the author of the entire book to represent the storm and stress with which the

new time brought to light new and significant ideas, and as the chief of these pointed out the pedagogic value of suffering as a trial. This independent thinker has had many followers among conservative exegetes, who have never mentioned his name or his thoughtful exposition. But the majority of critics since Eichhorn have rejected as a later interpolation all these chapters and in this they seem to the present writer to be unquestionably right. No plausible reason has as yet been given why the author of the dialogues should have brought in a fourth speaker to give four addresses without any reply to them, as though they were of final authority, ostensibly to rebuke the friends for not having found an answer to Job, as well as Job for his arrogance, while in reality he only quotes at tedious length the words of these earlier speakers, or varies in less impressive language the arguments already set forth, all for the purpose of uttering incidentally in two or three lines, without any particular emphasis, the thought that patient endurance of suffering may lead to perfect obedience, and hence the restoration of prosperity (cf. especially 36 : 15).

### 6. *The Speech of Yahwe*

In the original story some words of Yahwe to Job apparently preceded his words to Eliphaz (42 : 7). They can scarcely have contained anything else than approval of Job and censure of his friends with illustrations of how

Job had spoken the right thing of him. This probably suited the author of the dialogues well enough. Having said what was in his heart, he had no reason to interfere further with the book. The speech in our present text begins as did the original address, no doubt: "Then Yahwe answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said," the definite article before "whirlwind" probably referring to a preceding account of a theophany. But the speech we read is a severe arraignment of Job. In some respects it is one of the most beautiful productions of the Hebrew muse, as is generally recognized. So far as its literary character is concerned, it is quite worthy of the great poet of the dialogues, and most scholars have accepted it as his work. Yet there are many weighty considerations that may be raised against this view. Job had expressed his ardent wish to meet God personally (13 : 15 ff.; 23 : 2 f.). This was not for the purpose of asking him witty questions, as has been suggested, concerning the riddle of the divine government of the world. He desired to convince him that he had not merited the fate that had befallen him, to find out why he was no longer permitted to enjoy his friendship, to claim him as a witness against his friends. He had proudly, but in utmost sincerity, demanded the privilege of knowing what the charge was against him, requested that God himself would testify that his friends, led by a partisan and discreditable zeal to vindicate at all hazards the divine honor, had done him a grievous wrong, imputed

to him some hidden crime commensurate with the calamity he was supposed to suffer as a punishment. To all these questions there is not the slightest answer; not one of these requests is even thought worthy of a passing reference. In a tone of cruel mockery, the Almighty asks him to explain how the world was made, what are the mysteries of the process by which the things of earth, and sea, and air have come into existence and are maintained. He asks him who has determined the constellations of the sky, and marshals as a host the heavenly luminaries. He places before his eyes beasts living far away from man in the wilderness and yet are provided for by divine care. What is the relevancy of all this? Is the Job of the dialogues in need of this stinging rebuke? Has he ever questioned the power and wisdom of God? On the contrary, he has emphasized them. He has accepted all that the friends have said on that score (12 : 1–29; 26 : 5–14, and elsewhere). In fact, it is this wisdom and power, manifest everywhere, that gives him all his mental agony. For why should not he, who is so wise and powerful, be just and kind in dealing with man? Why should not the judge of all the earth be right?

It has been suggested that the purpose of this speech is to show Job that his suffering is an inscrutable mystery, as impossible for him to solve as the mysteries of creation, that there is an analogy between God's government of the universe in general and of man's affairs, and that his jus-

tice in one case must be taken for granted as well as in the other, where there are manifest hints of his watch-care not less than of his intelligence and power. But there is no intimation whatever in the text itself of any such purpose. The one thing that should have been said, if this was the intention, has been unaccountably left out. Others have thought that it did not matter so much what Yahwe said. The appearance of God to Job was in itself a satisfaction. God had at last spoken. Duhm, a critic of great penetration and insight, has in this manner put all the stress on the theophany, with the added observation that there would be a certain relief to the lacerated mind to be taken out of the narrower field of human concerns to the larger arena of nature's life. No doubt there is an element of truth in this. Nevertheless, it is wellnigh inconceivable that a man like the author of the dialogues should have forgotten all that Job really desired in such an interview with God, should have represented the Most High as showing such an utter disregard for the natural cravings of the heart he had made, the sorely stricken and perplexed creature for whom he once fancied that the divine heart might possibly yearn, even after he had been consigned to the shades of hell, and that he should have deliberately left out the question of all questions with which his work has been dealing. It seems more natural to suppose that another master workman, of a different spirit, seeing the irrelevancy of the old speech in view of Job's apparently

so arrogant attitude, was led to put the divine approval, as the present speech does, upon the contention of the friends, yet with a fresh emphasis upon the inscrutability of nature's economy in general.

### 7. *Minor Additions*

It is possible that Job's reply (chap. 40 : 3–5; 42 : 2, 3, 5, 6) was added to the speech of Yahwe by a later hand. It certainly is not written in the spirit of the dialogues, and has no sense except as an answer to the challenge in 40 : 2–5, 9–14. It has been generally seen, since Ewald first called attention to the fact, that the descriptions of Behemoth and Leviathan (chap. 40 : 15–41 : 26), so different in style and nature from the rest of the speech of Yahwe, are secondary. The twenty-fourth chapter, written in tristichs, and the twenty-eighth, with strophes of twelve lines and a refrain in two, are likewise interpolations. In other places also there are the usual additions by scribes. The shorter text of the earliest version suggests that there may be more of these than have been hitherto recognized.

### 8. *Authorship*

There was a time when the entire book was supposed to be the report, probably by Job himself, of what had actually been done in heaven and earth, and said by the

afflicted hero, his wife, his three friends, Elihu, Satan, and God. This view, in connection with certain unquestionable linguistic facts, led to the inquiry whether Arabic, Aramaic, or Edomitish had been used in the conversation. Already in the period of the Tannaim serious questions as to the authorship seem to have arisen. Johanan and Eleazar taught that Job was one of the exiles who opened a school in Tiberias, in spite of the objections that Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu must have been prophets among the nations; and a disciple of Samuel ben Nahmani maintained that Job had never existed, but that the book was a parable, like that of Nathan (Baba bathra 15a). The prevalent opinion appears to have been that the book was written by Moses in the sense that he had recorded what Job and the others had said (*ibid.*). When the growing appreciation of its literary character rendered it difficult to accept even this tradition, a compromise was first made by supposing a historic nucleus, while later everything, including the names themselves, was regarded as a free invention.

At the present time there is a tendency to consider the names as historical, and not symbolical. A colophon in the Greek version states, on the authority of "the Syriac book," that Job lived on the borders of Idumæa and Arabia, was formerly called Jobab, was the grandson of Esau, and the second king of Edom. It is not improbable that the legend first attached itself to this Edomitish king. Eliphaz

of Teman, a district in Edom, appears in Gen. 36 : 4, as a son of Esau. The Greek version shows that in Gen. 36 : 11, 15, the original reading was Zophar, who consequently was a son of Eliphaz. Bildad is probably identical with Bedad, the father of Adad, the third king of Edom (Gen. 36 : 35). The names found by the author of the prose story in the current legend may all have been those of actually existing rulers in Edom.

The writers to whom we owe the present book are unknown to us by name. The first of these was the author of the prose narrative. His work fell into the hands of the great poet, who substituted the matchless colloquies for the speeches of the friends. Beyond chapter 31 his hand cannot be seen. In the new dialogues Job expressed his desire to hear the voice of God, and the poet probably left the old speech of Yahwe, reproving the friends, to which he could have had no objection. He was not an editor. When the work left his hand, it presented very much the same general appearance that it had before. But it had by the touch of genius been made one of the masterpieces in human literature. The author of the speech of Yahwe no doubt added much to the beauty and impressiveness of the work, though it was not in his power to add greatly to the advance of thought or the solution of the problem. It was natural for the man who wrote the Elihu addresses to insert them after the dialogues and before the speech of Yahwe. Other additions were made by copyists and

owners of manuscripts. There is no sign of any editorial activity, or of a composition of the work in its present form. It grew by simple and perfectly intelligible changes to be what it is.

### 9. *The Date*

The prose story was probably written in the fifth century B. C. It is no longer possible to argue a pre-Deuteronomic origin from the efficacy ascribed to sacrifices, the absence of any reference to the sin offering, the ignorance of the centralization of the cult, and the prohibition of sacrifices in any other place than the one chosen or by any other priesthood than that of the central sanctuary. For the Elephantine papyri have shown that precisely the same religious views and conditions prevailed in the second half of the fifth century among the Jews of that island, who were to some extent in touch with the mother country. They strongly believe in the efficacy of sacrifices; they know no special sin-offering; they have a temple of their own in which the cult is carried on by persons not connected with the priestly family in Jerusalem. Even in Judæa, before Ezra and Nehemiah, a man living on the border of what was then Idumæa, near the old sanctuaries of the Negeb, may well have been sufficiently in touch with the order of things which only very gradually was passing away in the capital to present the old Job legends without introducing into it more modern ideas and customs. The

reference to the Chaldæans has a decidedly antiquarian look. Before Nabu-apal-uzur, the Chaldæans are not likely to have made raids on the borders of Edom, and the description does not suggest the invasion of an imperial army. The historian who in the exile wrote the Book of Kings did not as yet know the figure of Satan. He appears for the first time in Zechariah (3 : 1, 2), and has unquestionably developed under the influence of Persian dualism.

The references to Noah, Daniel, and Job in Ezek. 14 : 14 ff. do not prove the existence of a book of Job any more than that of books of Daniel and Noah, but presuppose acquaintance with these heroes of righteousness. If it is difficult to assume that Ezekiel speaks thus of a younger contemporary, "a Babylonian student," as Reuss calls him, it is even more difficult to conceive of a Daniel not connected at all with the period of history to which the Book of Daniel assigns him. Were a passage as suspicious as this found in Moses, or any of the other prophets, the critics would not hesitate long. The present writer cannot share the naïve and pathetic faith in the integrity of a book whose text, as is generally admitted, has suffered more from the carelessness and inaccuracy of scribes than perhaps any other in the canon. Ezek. 14 : 12–23, which does not connect either with what precedes or what follows, seems to him plainly secondary. The passage does not affect the date of the prose story.

There can be no question that the dialogues are much later. It is not easy to determine how much. Even if acquaintance with the Prometheus story in the form given it by Æschylus and the dialogues of Plato is assumed, this would not necessarily preclude a date earlier than Alexander. It is probable, however, that we shall have to go down to the period of the diadochi or the first Ptolemies. The close relations to Egypt at a time when Palestine was ruled from Alexandria facilitated a peaceful exchange of ideas. The spiritual atmosphere began to be saturated with Hellenism, influencing not only those who spoke the Greek language, but also the Aramaic-speaking part of the population. This work was the first-fruits of the wisdom-literature, possibly a century earlier than Ecclesiasticus.

It is possible that the present speech of Yahwe represented the reaction in the early Seleucid period, and highly probable that the Elihu addresses were written after the Book of Chronicles and the Apocalypse of Daniel had appeared, in the second century B. C. The Praise of Wisdom and the descriptions of Behemoth and Leviathan probably belong to the same century. Even after the Greek version had been made, in the beginning of the first century A. D., as Grätz has shown, the text underwent many changes.

### 10. *Place of Composition*

According to the earliest tradition, preserved in the Greek text, Job lived in the land of Ausis, on the border of Idumæa and Arabia, and there the conversation was supposed to have occurred. Those who regarded Moses as the writer must have looked upon the book as composed outside of Palestine, and that has, of course, been the position of all who failed to recognize it as a work of fiction. The opinion of Johanan and Eleazar, according to which the author lived in Tiberias, has probably no more value than later conjectures. Egypt has often been thought of as the home of the poet. But aside from the descriptions of Behemoth and Leviathan, to which the hippopotamus and the crocodile may have furnished some features, there is nothing that might not have been known in Palestine, such as the pyramids, the Nile-grass, or the light papyrus skiffs.

It is not improbable that the author of the folk-story lived in the Negeb, or south country, between Judæa and Egypt to the west, and Edom to the east. The great poet himself may have acquired his knowledge of the desert and of Egypt by travel. Where in Palestine he lived, we do not know. If the writer who has described Behemoth and Leviathan thought of the hippopotamus and the crocodile, he is more likely to have heard of these animals than to have seen them with his own eyes. There is nothing to

indicate where the authors of Yahwe's speech and the Elihu addresses lived. Most probably the entire book was produced in Palestine.

### II. *Messages to the Contemporaries*

To those who first read the story of Job's patience under a terrible affliction on earth, in complete ignorance of the wager in heaven, and of the reward that came to him when he had endured the trial of his faith and heaven's confidence in his disinterested service had been vindicated, there must have come a fresh sense of the value set on character, the dignity of calm submission to the inevitable, the worth of the soul that can be trusted, the certainty that whatever may seem wrong will, in the end, be righted. While it may have been difficult for many to see the inadequacy of the view so stoutly maintained by the friends of Job, or to penetrate through the tempest of excited feeling, rash words, and reckless charges to the eagerness for truth, the anxiety to see things as they really are, the longing for foundations that shall stand, the demand for truer criteria by which to judge, the yearning for an ideal that can be unreservedly worshipped, characteristic of Job as depicted in the dialogues, there were no doubt those whose spiritual experience had prepared them to watch with sympathy these struggles of the soul for a more satisfactory interpretation of life, and to draw from the stirring spectacle

abiding profit. Not in vain had the great poet laid bare the innermost recesses of his heart; there were other hearts that understood him. The singer of God's power and wisdom, manifest in the universe, also brought a message of value to those who looked out with curious eyes, sharpened by the growing demand for comprehensive and careful observation, upon the manifold phenomena of nature's life. They were forced to recognize that man is but a part of nature, and that no problem affecting man's relations can be ultimately solved without regard to the whole plan, to the nature of things. In a vague, and yet real, way this must have come home to them, even if the author disappointed them, as he does us, by ignoring the questions at issue, and by failing to point out the relations of thought that may have presented themselves to his mind. So also the addresses of Elihu, with all their comparative crudeness, may have given help to some by indicating that the whole truth had not been uttered, either by Job or his friends, and by hinting at least at another view-point, from which the suffering of the just may be looked upon as having an educative value.

### 12. *Messages to Posterity*

A work like this belongs, in a very real sense, to all ages. It is interpreted afresh by each generation. It is read in the light of its own peculiar problems, its increased mass

of material available for solving them, its new questions, its growing spiritual experience. There came a time when the postulate of the legend and of the friends could no longer be accepted, and the idea that man's accounts are necessarily squared by a righteous God before death was very generally abandoned. Men found relief in the thought of a conscious life beyond the grave, either of the soul alone, because of its nature, or of body and soul together, restored by a resurrection, and in the conviction that eternal rewards and punishments would restore the moral equilibrium and vindicate God's justice. They went beyond the realm of visible things into an unseen world, and extended to all the countless beings within its boundaries the same inexorable law of justice whose perfect operation may be denied in the segment but not in the never-ending circle. It was possible one day to point out, with a serenity unclouded by any doubt or question, how the sun shines on the just and the unjust, the rain descends on the bad man's field, the falling tower crushes under its weight men who were no more sinners than those that escaped, this seeming unconcern about retribution being only the manifestation of a heavenly father's impartiality and love, drawing his children to repentance, these things of the passing moment having no importance when put in the balances over against the eternal realities. For the Book of Job had prepared the way. It had loosened the connection between the external circum-

stances of earthly life and character, had raised to primary importance the testimony of conscience, had hinted at the love of the Creator for his handiwork as the most plausible element to be considered in the problem of immortality, and had called for a more perfect and transcendent conception of the divine being. The new faith saw itself reflected in the old poem. It heard from the lips of the tried patriarch its own grand credo, its jubilant affirmation of a divine Redeemer's love and a glorious resurrection from the dead. The pathos of the fourteenth chapter was not lost, but "Man born of woman" could be recited with 1 Cor. 15 at funerals, where the survivors did not mourn as those who have no hope. Thus the book spoke, while men believed.

When a new age began to test the foundations, to question again the adequacy of prevalent conceptions, as strongly intrenched as those had been which were displaced by them, the Book of Job brought a different message. The original thought came back in its simple grandeur, its terrible urgency, its deep significance. It was again natural for the mind to inquire about the basis of truth, the cause of suffering, the presence of a design in the universe, the nature of ultimate reality. Traditional theories no longer satisfied; external authority was no longer binding; the loud affirmations of the mass no longer brought assurance to the individual. Disease, and war, and ravages by natural forces were no longer thought of

as divine afflictions or as unpreventable evils; the perception of the laws of heredity rendered it impossible to assign the responsibility to the individual for all that befalls him; the idea of sin ceased to have the dominating position it had had in the interpretation of life. The interest shifted back from heaven and hell to earth once more; the life of man, short though it be, no longer seemed so infinitesimal, its relations and conditions so unimportant, as when viewed *sub specie æternitatis;* the question could not be suppressed what guarantee men have that perfect justice will be meted out in any other part of the universe, if it is not in the only world of which they have any knowledge; an eternal heaven and an eternal hell seemed wholly out of proportion to the merits or demerits of a short life, and therefore, infinitely more unjust than any exaggeration of temporary happiness or misfortune; the determination of Job not to listen too eagerly to the siren song of Elysian fields, but to abide by the interpretation imposed by the facts, appeared reasonable. And the inmost nature of the Great Source, the ultimate character of reality, could no longer be defined in the terms of ancient mythology or creedal statements. Whether the universe is conscious throughout, and with a consciousness that is a unit, or consciousness is a sporadic efflorescence where the conditions are favorable; whether the apparently infinite and exhaustless energy waits on an intelligent design or is only incidentally touched by consciously exercised will;

and whether there are discernible in the universe outside of man, so far as it affects his destiny, those moral qualities that seem to man the highest, were questions returning with increased force because of the closer and more scientific knowledge of nature which had been gained. Job spoke to the modern mind as he had never spoken before.

It is, no doubt, true that, as man learns how to adjust himself to nature, control and utilize its forces, and enjoy its wealth and beauty, and also how to arrange his social relations so as to give to each human being a proper education, suitable work, an equitable share in the common wealth, a reasonable freedom from the tyranny of institutions, opportunity for personal development, and security for old age, the universal life in which he lives and moves and has his being will seem to him more right and good. As the story of life on earth and in the heavens unfolds, the sense of the unity of all that is will deepen, the consciousness of mystery will increase to spur the intellect and to ennoble the heart, while the impression of arbitrary power and irrationality will vanish. But long ages will pass before this cry *ex profundis* shall have ceased to bear a message of present significance to the sons of men.

## II

### PROLOGUE AND EPILOGUE

(Chaps. 1, 2, 42 : 7–17)

### 1. *The Paraphrase*

There was a man in the land of Uz by the name of Job. He was righteous and God-fearing, and so prosperous that he was regarded as the greatest of all the Bene Kedem. His piety was such that whenever his sons held a feast and invited their sisters to eat and drink with them, he would rise early in the morning and offer a burnt offering for each of them, to atone for any sin committed, or word offensive to God spoken, under the influence of their gayety. The case of this man was brought up one day in the heavenly council, when the sons of God presented themselves before Yahwe, and Satan was among them. To Yahwe's question whence he had come, Satan answered that he had been walking up and down in the earth. When Yahwe asked him if he had also observed his servant Job, a more righteous and pious man than any other in all the earth, Satan suggested that there was good reason for his excellent behavior, as Yahwe had made him very rich, but that he would surely renounce his God if his wealth were taken away from him. Yahwe then gave Satan permission to touch his property, but not his person. As a con-

sequence of this scene in heaven, blow after blow fell upon Job. Sabæans robbed him of his oxen and slew the servants; the lightning struck the sheep and killed the shepherds; three bands of Chaldæans took away the camels and put to death the young men caring for them; and a great desert storm upset the house where his sons and daughters were feasting and they were all killed. Job, then, rent his mantle and shaved his head. Prostrating himself upon the ground, he worshipped, humbly acknowledging that he had brought nothing with him into the world and would not bring anything out of it. He blessed the name of Yahwe, who gives and takes away, according to his own pleasure. Thus he uttered no sinful word of criticism or complaint.

At another council in heaven Yahwe called the attention of Satan to the fact that Job still held fast to his integrity, and that Satan therefore had incited him to destroy Job without cause. Satan, however, maintained that a man may be willing to give up everything that belongs to him, so it does not affect his own body. Satan was therefore granted the right to afflict him with disease, but he must spare his life. He smote him with leprosy. The itching of the many sores with which he was covered from head to foot made him scratch himself with a potsherd where he sat among the ashes. Yet when his wife told him to renounce God and die, he rebuked her for speaking so foolishly, since it was man's evident duty to

receive evil from the hand of God in the spirit of patient submission, as well as to receive good with gratitude. Thus he did not sin even with his lips.

Job had three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. When they heard of all this evil that had befallen Job, they came to comfort him. Having shown their sympathy by weeping, rending their garments, and sprinkling dust upon their heads, they sat in silence for seven days, and then spoke. To their words Job made answer, and finally Yahwe himself spoke. His judgment was that his servant Job had spoken the thing that was right concerning him. On the other hand, he was so angry with his three friends that their lives were in danger. Yet he was willing to spare them, if his servant Job would pray for them, as they offered their burnt offerings to atone for their sins. The affliction of Job ceased, when he thus prayed for those who had attacked him and spoken wrongly concerning Yahwe. His brothers, sisters, and other acquaintances came back, and gave him as an atonement for the wrong they had done in leaving him each a piece of money and a ring of gold. Job became richer than he had ever been, had seven sons and three daughters, and died at the ripe old age of one hundred and forty years.

## 2. *The Notes*

A part of the prose story has been lost, the dialogues and the speech of Yahwe, as given in the present text having taken its place. But the beginning of the epilogue (42 : 7 ff.) shows what the tenor of the original addresses must have been, as has been indicated in the introduction to the book. The "sons of God" were probably understood, at the time the story was written, as angels. Originally the term, according to general Semitic usage, denoted the members of the class of Elohim, or gods. It is not probable that Satan was ever a member of this circle of gods, that he once was regarded as a divine being. After the sons of God, owing to the movement toward monotheism, had been degraded to the rank of ministering spirits, or messengers sent by the highest god, Yahwe, one of them was thought of as the opponent, the public prosecutor, as it were, accusing men in Israel whom he regarded as having sinned. In this light he appears in Zech. 3 : 1, where he accuses Joshua, the high priest. Later his function was apparently extended to all men, and he goes up and down in the earth, observing men's failings and reporting them on high. He also seems to have become chief executioner, doing many things which formerly were ascribed to Yahwe himself, but a more transcendental conception of the deity preferred to assign to a subordinate. It is to be observed that he also incites Yahwe to do what

he afterwards regrets. Under the influence, no doubt, of Persian dualism, he gradually grew into a formidable power of evil and prince of darkness. But that is not yet his position in the prose story. The means that Satan uses to impoverish Job, after the divine permission has been granted, are partly marauding bands of Sabæans and Chaldæans, partly natural agencies, like the lightning and the fierce desert storm, partly disease. In all these realms Satan can exercise his activity. The particular disease that strikes Job is the elephantiasis. Leprosy was a term covering many cutaneous diseases. This was the worst form of leprosy, deemed incurable. The preventive burnt offering shows not only a strong faith in the efficacy of sacrifices, but also advanced speculation on the subject. There must have been some circles in which a truly pious man was expected to offer sacrifices for others before they had sinned, in order to hold back the hand ready to strike immediately the guilty party. The reason why Satan was left out of the epilogue may have been some rebuke administered to him by Yahwe, implying even more clearly than the reference in the prologue Yahwe's anger and regret at having been betrayed by Satan's cleverness into such harsh treatment of his faithful servant. Possibly Job's wife was not mentioned because, like the others, she would have had to make an offering, but as a woman was not considered fit to offer a sacrifice. There may be a certain admission of wrong done to Job in the doubling of

his wealth. A similar thought had been expressed by the author of Isa. 40 ff. when he declared that Israel had been punished doubly by the hand of Yahwe for all its transgressions, and therefore could with greater assurance look forward to more than a restoration of its former prosperity.

The prologue, as it now stands, brings vividly before us the principal characters of the book. Job is shown to be a genuinely righteous, innocent man, subjected to the severest tests that a human being can endure, in order that he may prove the existence of disinterested righteousness. He does not know that he is undergoing such a test, nor do his friends, who love and honor him at the start, but who take for granted that these accumulated misfortunes are signs of wickedness, and therefore are in a state of extreme perplexity.

## III

### JOB'S LAMENT
(Chap. 3)

#### 1. *The Translation*

May God curse the day of my birth (3 : 3–10)

Perish the day when I was born,
The night that said, "Behold a man!"
In darkness let that night be hid,
And look for light that never comes.

Let God not seek it from on high,
And let no light upon it shine.
Let gloom and blackness claim their own,
Let it be covered by the clouds.

May dread eclipses terror bring,
Darkness itself drag it away.
Give it no place in the year's days,
Let it not come while the months pass.

O let that night be barrenness,
No shout of joy be heard in it.
Let cursers of the day curse it,
Those skilled to stir Leviathan.

Let all the stars be dark that night,
None greet the eyelids of the dawn;
For it shut not my mother's womb,
Nor hid life's misery from my eyes.

Why did I not die in the womb;
Or come from it and pass away?
Why were there knees to welcome me?
Why were there breasts for me to suck?

Why did I not pass at birth into the peace of death? (3 : 11–19)

Then should I have lain down to rest,
I should have slept and been in peace,
With kings and rulers of the earth
Who built themselves great pyramids,

Or with the princes rich in gold,
With silver filling their abodes.
The wicked trouble there no more,
And there the weary are at rest.

The prisoners are there at ease,
They hear not the taskmaster's voice;
Lowly and high there are the same,
And from his lord the slave is free.

Why does God permit men to live on in helpless misery? (3 : 20–26)

Why gives he light to wretched men,
And life to those of bitter soul;
Who wait for death and it comes not;
Who sigh for it as for a prize;

Who would rejoice to have a mound,
Exult if they could find a tomb;
To one whose destiny is hid,
And whom the Most High hedges in?

Fear I a thing, it seizes me,
And what I dread upon me falls.
I have not yet recovered peace,
Or rest, or ease, when anguish comes.

### 2. *The Notes*

The great work of the poet of the colloquies begins with a touching elegy, in which Job expresses a wish that he had never been born. His birthday is personified and cursed. If it cannot be driven away from the days of the year by darkness and terrible eclipses, let such an evil spell be cast upon it by conjurers that it shall never usher a human being into life. Leviathan is the great sea-serpent, the monster living in the primeval ocean; and this serpent evidently can cause eclipses and leave a day in utter darkness. There are magicians skilful enough to stir up this monster. If none of the stars come out during that night, there will be none to watch, with fading light, the appearance of the dawn, conceived of as a goddess with beautiful eyelids. There should be no light of any kind on a day so guilty of wrong in giving life to one who should not have been born. He ought never to have issued from the womb, or been given nourishment. He should have been left to a peace as deep as that of the dead, great or small, who no longer trouble or are troubled. Why should life have been given at all to the class of wretched men whose condition is such that they ask for no higher boon than death? Especially why should one like himself have been thrown into the world to whom the future is so dark and who is kept by God himself a prisoner within a narrow space where fear and anguish hold their sway and whence there is no escape?

This lament states the problem in the most forcible manner, and serves as the natural starting-point for the discussion which follows. Job speaks out of the depths of anguish and uncertainty. His utterance is impassioned. It is an appeal, a protest, not an argument. It has the force of showing the friends that Job is not submissive to God, but in an angry or, at least, a questioning mood. So, in their different ways, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar seek to cause Job to realize that these sorrows are from God, with whom in some way he has become estranged.

## IV

### FIRST CYCLE OF DIALOGUES

(Chaps. 4–14)

#### 1. *The Translation*

(1) *Eliphaz's Discourse (chaps. 4–5)*

Has your well-tested piety failed you at last? (4 : 1–11)

May one to the disheartened speak?
Yet who can here withhold his words?
Thou hast thyself instructed men,
Hast given strength to feeble hands.

Thy words have raised the fallen up,
Knees that were bent thou hast made strong.
Thou faintest when it comes to thee;
It touches thee, thou art amazed.

Is not thy piety thy trust,
Thy upright life thy confidence?
Who ever perished without guilt?
Where was the righteous man destroyed?

In a vision of the night God revealed to me His transcendental holiness and majesty, and man's sinful nature (4 : 12–21)

To me a word came once by stealth;
The whisper of it caught my ear
In dreams, in visions of the night,
When deep sleep falls on sons of men.

Terror and trembling on me fell;
My very bones were thrilled with fear.
A spirit moved before my face,
The hair upon my body rose.

A form appeared before my eyes,
I could not see its countenance.
Near me it stood in majesty
And silence—then a voice I heard:

"Can man be just before his God,
Before his maker man be pure?
His heavenly host he cannot trust,
With his own angels he finds fault,

"More, then, with dwellers in the clay,
Whose homes are founded on the dust,
More quickly crushed than is a moth
That perishes 'twixt morn and eve,

"Destroyed, with no one noticing,
Vanished and gone forevermore;
If the tent-cord is plucked away,
They die, but not as wise men die."

**The foolish gain nothing but destruction (5 : 1–7)**

As for the fool, his wrath kills him,
By passion is the simple slain.
I saw myself a fool take root,
His habitation quickly rot.

Far from all aid his children are,
Without a helper they are crushed.
Whoever hungers eats their grain,
Whoever thirsts draws from their well.

**Submit your cause to God, who deals wisely with mankind (5 : 8–16)**

But I, I would the Most High seek,
To God I would submit my cause,
Who does great things past finding out,
And miracles no man can count,

To set on high the lowly ones,
And raise to safety those that mourn;
Who overthrows the shrewd men's plan,
That their hands can accomplish naught;

Who in their cunning snares the wise,
The crafty overreach themselves,
They meet with darkness in the day,
As in the night they grope at noon;

But who the weak saves from the sword,
And from the strong man's arm the poor.
Then for the needy there is hope,
Iniquity must shut its mouth.

Blessed the man whom God corrects.
Spurn not the chastening of the Lord.
For he can wound and bind it up,
Bruise, and his hands can heal again.

His chastening hand will bring thee to peace, righteousness, and happiness (5 : 17–27)

Out of six troubles he will save,
In seven shall no ill touch thee;
In famine he from death redeems,
In war from power of the sword.

In pestilence thou shalt be hid,
Nor shalt thou devastation fear;
With the field's stones thou art in league,
The wild beasts are at peace with thee.

Thou shalt see how thy tent is safe,
Miss nothing, looking o'er thy house.
Thou shalt see how thy seed spreads forth,
Thy offspring like the earth's green grass.

Thou shalt go hence in ripe old age,
As a sheaf garnered in its time,
Lo, this we searched out; so it is;
So we have heard, and know thou this.

(2) *Job's Reply* (*chaps.* 6–7)

My calamities are unbearable; God seems to be attacking me; O that he would destroy me in my helplessness (6 : 1–14)

O that my anger could be weighed,
And my fate balanced against it!
'Twould sink as deep as ocean's sand.
On this account my words were rash.

For by God's arrows I am shot;
Their poison has my spirit sucked.
God's terrors me confusion bring;
My soul refuses to find rest.

Does the wild ass bray o'er the grass?
Does the ox o'er his fodder low?
Is without salt the tasteless used?
Is savor in an egg's white left?

O that my prayer would answered be,
That God would grant me my desire,
That he would choose to crush me now,
That swiftly he would cut me off!

A comfort this would be to me,
Unsparing pain would give me joy.
What strength have I to bear it now?
What is my end, if I endure?

Is then my strength the strength of stones,
And is my body made of brass?

Behold, I have no hope at all;
Prosperity is driven forth.

My friends are faithless as a brook,
A river rising o'er its bed:
Becoming turbid when it melts,
When in it hides the falling snow.

Ye, my friends, are as disappointing as the river-beds which entice the travellers only to delude them (6 : 15–20)

When summer comes, they disappear,
When it grows hot, they swiftly pass;
Wayfarers leave accustomed roads,
Go to the waste, and perish there.

The caravans of Teima look,
Sabæans set their hope on them;
Their confidence brings them to shame,
They search the spot and are deceived.

Have I perchance said: "Give to me,
Out of your wealth bring forth for me;
Deliver me from foeman's hand,
Redeem me from oppressor's power"?

Explain to me wherein I have really been at fault; I will deal fairly with you (6 : 21–29)

Teach me and I will hold my tongue,
And what I erred make plain to me.
How sweet are words of upright men!
But what does your upbraiding prove?

Is all your aim to censure words?
Cries of despair are for the wind.
Ye fall upon a righteous man,
Yea, even rush upon your friend.

But now be pleased to look at me.
I surely will not lie to you.
Turn ere ye do an unjust deed,
Turn, for I still maintain my right.

Something is radically wrong. I live in wretchedness, day and night, helpless and hopeless (6:30–7:10)

Is there injustice on my tongue?
Cannot my palate taste what's wrong?
Has not a hard time man on earth?
Is not his life a hireling's life?

Like servant panting for the shade,
Like hireling looking for his wage;
So am I heir to months of ill,
And nights of misery are my lot.

If I lie down to sleep, I say:
"When comes the day that I may rest?"
And if I rise: "When comes the night?"
Sated with unrest till it dawns.

My flesh is clothed with worms and clod;
My skin heals up, breaks out again.
Like weaver's shuttle are my days,
They pass without a ray of hope.

A breath, remember, is my life;
Mine eyes shall never see a change.
No eye of friend shall me behold,
Thine own eye seek me all in vain.

The cloud has vanished and is gone;
None from the nether world comes back,
Or to his house returns again.
His place shall find him never more.

Therefore my mouth I'll not restrain,
Will in my spirit's anguish speak.
Am I the Sea, the Chaos-born,
That over me thou watchest thus?

Why, O God, shouldst thou visit me incessantly in this manner; cannot I be pardoned before I die? (7 : 11–21)

My bed, I think, shall comfort me,
My couch shall help me in distress.
Then thou dost trouble me with dreams,
With visions terrifiest me.

Rather than this I would be choked,
Despising death more than my pains.
I cannot live forevermore,
My life's a breath—let me alone!

What's man that thou shouldst honor him,
That thou shouldst set thy heart on him,
That thou shouldst visit him each day,
That thou shouldst test him all the time?

When wilt thou look away from me?
Let go while I may catch my breath.
A target thou hast made of me.
Have I a burden been to thee?

Why canst thou not blot out my sin,
And take my guilt away from me?
For now I lay me in the dust,
When thou shalt seek me, I am gone.

(3) *Bildad's Discourse* (*chap.* 8)

How preposterous to question God's justice! He deals generously with every righteous man (8 : 1–7)

How long wilt thou repeat such things?
Thy words are but a mighty wind.
Will God himself pervert the right,
Justice the Almighty corrupt?

If against him thy sons have sinned,
And he has punished their wrong acts,
Thou then shouldst earnestly seek God,
Make supplication for his grace.

If thou art truly pure and just,
He will restore thy prosperous home;
Then though thy start be very small,
He makes thy end exceeding great.

For ask the generations past,
Note what the fathers have searched out.
Of yesterday we are, know naught,
A shadow are our days on earth.

All the wisdom of the past teaches the sad fate of godless men (8 : 8–18)

"Does without mire papyrus grow?
Does without water Nile-grass thrive?
When green, not yet for cutting ripe,
It dries up, sooner than all herbs.

"Such is the end of godless men,
Thus perishes the hope they have.
The fool relies on fragile threads,
His trust is in a spider's web.

"He leans upon his house—it yields;
He seizes hold of it—it falls.
He stands in sunshine, full of sap,
Over his garden sprouts shoot forth;

"Around the fountain are his roots,
He grows up in a house of stone.
If from his place he is cut off,
'I never saw thee,' it exclaims.

"This is the end his life will take,
And others from the dust will rise;
Lo, God will not despise the just,
Nor will he hold the bad man's hand."

And that the righteous will rejoice (8 : 19–22)

With laughter he will fill thy mouth,
With songs of gladness fill thy lips.
Thy haters will be clothed with shame,
The wicked have their tents no more.

(4) *Job's Reply* (chaps. 9–10)

I acknowledge that man cannot equal God in wisdom or in power; I cannot make him answer me (9 : 1–16)

Truly I know that it is so.
How could a man be just with God?
If he his questions should propound,
Not one of thousand could he meet.

Wise is his mind and great his strength.
Who can defy him and be safe?
He mountains unawares removes,
He overturns them in his wrath.

He shakes the earth out of its place,
And makes its pillars reel and sway;
Speaks to the sun—it shines no more,
And puts a seal upon the stars.

He stretched the heavens all alone,
Walked on the high waves of the sea;
Ursa and Sirius he made,
Orion and the Southern Cross.

He passes me—I see him not;
He glides by—I perceive him not;

He seizes—who can hold him back,
Or say to him: "What doest thou?"

God does not hold his fury back:
Beneath him friends of Rahab bowed.
How much less then could I reply,
Or choose the proper words with him?

Though just, I would no answer have,
Must plead for favors from my judge.
He would not answer, though I cried,
I could not trust he heard my voice.

He overturns me with a storm,
And without cause inflicts his blows.
He gives my spirit no release,
With bitterness he fills my cup.

He seems to use his pleasure on good and bad alike; we have no common ground, no arbiter, before whom I can plead (9 : 17–35)

In test of strength he has the power;
In judgment, who sets him a term?
Though I am just, his mouth condemns,
Though upright, he oppresses me.

Upright I am—I reck not life,
Despise existence. 'Tis the same.
Just and unjust he brings to naught.
If 'tis not he, who is it then?

If sudden pestilence brings death,
The guiltless perish, and he laughs.
The earth is to the wicked given,
He veils the countenance of the judge.

My days are like a runner swift,
They flee away and see no good.
Papyrus-vessel like they speed,
Like eagles swooping on their prey.

Said I: "I will forget my grief,
Let go, and seek a moment's cheer."
All I have suffered tortures me,
I know he will not speak me free.

If in the snow I wash myself,
And if I cleanse my hands with lye,
Into the dirt he plunges me,
So that my friends abhor my sight.

For he is not a man like me,
That we might both be brought to court.
There is no arbiter 'twixt us
To put his hand upon us both,

To turn from me his ruler's staff,
That fear of him unman me not,
That I might speak, nothing afraid.
For in myself I am not thus.

I am so weary of my life,
My plaint against him I pour out.
I say to God: "Thou must not damn!
Tell me why thou opposest me."

Why, O God, dost thou oppress one whom thou knowest to be without sin (10 : 1–7)

Does it seem good to torture me,
Despise the work of thy own hands?
Hast thou the eyes of carnal man,
And dost thou see as a man sees,

That thou must seek my wickedness,
And search to find my hidden sin?
Thou knowest well I have not sinned,
And in my hand there is no guilt.

Thy hands have formed and fashioned me,
Why then wilt thou destroy me now?
Remember, thou hast formed this clay.
Wilt thou again turn me to dust?

Didst thou fashion me and give me life in order to exhibit thy power? (10 : 8–17)

Hast thou not poured me out as milk,
Churned me together as a cheese,
Covered me o'er with flesh and skin,
Put bones and sinews through my frame?

Thou gav'st me life, and joy of life,
Thy providence watched o'er my breath.
And this thou hiddest in thy heart.
I know it—this has been thy plan:

If I should fail, thou then wouldst watch,
And not redeem me from my guilt.
If I should sin, woe then to me!
I might not lift my hand, though just.

Thy wonders thou wouldst show on me,
Fresh witnesses against me call,
Make greater still thy wrath at me,
And place new burdens on my back.

Why didst thou not let me die at birth? (10 : 18–22)

Why didst thou bring me from the womb?
I might have breathed my last unseen.
As one not born, I might have been,
Carried from womb to sepulchre.

Is not my lifetime short enough?
Let me alone to have some cheer,
Ere I must go whence none return,
To realms of darkness and of gloom.

(5) *Zophar's Discourse* (*chap.* 11)

Would that God might answer such a boastful self-justifier! (11 : 1–5)

Shall this windbag unanswered be,
A man of lips be in the right?
Shall these thy babblings silence men,
That thou mayst mock, none shaming thee,

And say, "Reproachless is my life,
And clean am I in my own eyes?"

But, O that God himself would speak,
And open against thee his lips,

Make known to thee how wise he is,
How wonderful his reason is!
Canst thou search out the deeps of God?
Canst thou reach the Almighty's bounds?

His wisdom is incomprehensible; his knowledge of sin complete (11 : 6–12)

Higher than heaven, what canst thou do?
Lower than hell, what canst thou know?
Longer the measure than the earth,
Wider it is than all the sea.

If he pass by and apprehend,
And bring to court, who can prevent?
For he knows who the wicked are,
And sees and marks iniquity.

But if thou wilt direct thy heart,
And unto him spread forth thy hands,
If far from wrong thy hand remain,
And in thy tent no evil dwell,

Confess thy sins to him and thou shalt have forgiveness, prosperity, and peace (11 : 13–20)

Then thou mayst spotless lift thy face,
Be firm and without slightest fear.
For then thou shalt forget thy ills,
Recalling them as winters past.

Brighter than noon shall be thy life,
Darkness itself shall be like morn.
Thou shalt feel safe, for there is hope,
Lie down with neither fear nor sighs.

The multitudes shall flatter thee;
Eyes of the wicked shall grow dim.
For refuge they no more shall have,
Their hope is to give up the ghost.

(6) *Job's Reply* (*chaps.* 12–14)

Ye assume to know the truth, but I, too, have intelligence (12 : 1–13)

Ye are the people, verily,
And wisdom—it will die with you!
But I can reason as you can,
And who does not know things like these?

Does not the ear examine words?
Does not the palate taste the food?
Does wisdom, then, consist in years.
And judgment in the length of days?

God does with the world and its occupants as he will; I have perceived this (12: 14–13: 2)

Lo, he tears down, and who builds up?
He shuts, who opens for a man?
He checks the waters—they dry up;
He lets them loose—they waste the earth.

With him are strength and deep insight,
His are deceiver and deceived.

He makes earth's sages act like dolts,
He turns its judges into fools.

He loosens bands that kings have tied,
And binds the rope around their loins;
Leads priests away without their robes,
And overthrows old families.

He renders speechless orators,
Old men's discernment he removes;
Pours upon princes deep disgrace,
Loosens the girdle of the strong;

From rulers takes their wit away,
In pathless wastes he lets them stray;
They grope in darkness without light,
And reel as does a drunken man.

Behold, all this my eye has seen,
My ear has heard and understood.
What ye know, that I also know,
Before you fall not to the ground.

But to the Most High I will speak,
Present my arguments to God.
For ye are patchers up of lies,
Unskilled physicians are ye all.

Ye are God's partisans, and hesitate not to lie for his sake (13 : 3–12)

O that ye would keep silence once!
That would be wisdom on your part.
Now listen to my reasoning,
And heed the charges of my lips.

Will ye speak what is wrong for God,
And utter falsehoods for his sake?
Will ye be partisans for God,
Be special pleaders in his cause?

Would it be well, should he search you?
Could ye deceive him as a man?
He verily would punish you,
If secretly ye favored him.

Will not his power overawe,
The dread of him upon you fall?
Proverbs of ashes are your saws;
Bulwarks of clay your bulwarks are.

Whatever the consequences, I will be true to my conscience before him (13 : 13–19)

Be silent, then, and let me speak.
Whatever will, may come on me!
My flesh I will take in my teeth,
My life into my hand I take.

Let him slay me—I cannot last,
Before him I maintain my right.
Ev'n this shall be my confidence:
No hypocrite would come to him.

Lo, now I have prepared my case,
I know that I am in the right.
Who is there will contend with me?
If conquered, silent I will die.

Only two things do not to me,
Then from thy face I will not hide:
Remove thy hand that rests on me,
Let me not be unmanned by fear.

O God, let me plead my cause freely and without fear; why dost thou treat me as a foe? (13 : 20–28)

Then call—and I will answer thee;
Or I will speak, thou answering me.
What is the measure of my sin?
And my transgression let me know.

Why hidest thou from me thy face,
And lookest on me as thy foe?
Why wilt thou chase a faded leaf,
And why pursue the withered grass?

Thou ordainst bitter things for me,
Mak'st me inherit youthful sins,
Puttest my feet within the stocks,
And keepest watch on all my paths.

Thou mak'st a cut around my root,
Drawest a circle about it,
That it decay like rotten things,
Like garments eaten by the moth.

The days of a man are at best both few and full of trouble (14 : 1–6)

Man, born of woman, frail and weak,
Short-lived and full of unrest is,
Grows like a flower, withers soon,
Flees like a shadow, lingers not.

On such a one thy glance is cast,
And him thou bringest into court!
How could the clean from unclean come?
Not one is free from every fault.

The number of his days is known,
The sum of all his months, to thee.
Look thou away that he may rest,
Enjoy his day, as does a slave.

The fallen tree may sprout again, but man, once dead, does not awake (14 : 7–12)

For there is hope yet for a tree,
If it is felled, it may not die,
May live and may shoot up again,
Its tender sprout may never fail.

Its roots may in the earth grow old,
And in the dust its trunk may die;
Yet at the scent of water sprout,
And as a young plant put forth boughs.

But man dies and lies in the dust,
When he departs, he is no more,
Awakes not till the heavens pass,
Is not aroused out of his sleep.

I would wait indefinitely, if a change could come; if thou wouldst call me back to life and hope; but man has no hope (14 : 13–22)

O that thou wouldst leave me in hell,
Conceal me till thy wrath be spent;
Set me a time, remember me,
If man could die, and live again!

Through my hard service I would wait,
Until my sentinel's change should come.
Then thou wouldst call, I answer thee;
For thou wouldst yearn for thine own work.

But now thou countest every step,
Passest not by my sinful deed,
Sealst my transgression in a bag,
And sewest up my awful crime.

Yet even mountains crumble down,
The rock removes from out its place,
The water wears the stones to dust,
Its floods sweep off the very ground.

So thou destroyst the hope of man,
He falls asleep and rises not;
Thou crushest him, and he is gone,
Dismissest him, his features change.

His sons are honored, he knows naught;
They are brought low, he sees it not.
Only his flesh suffers decay,
And for himself he has to mourn.

### 2. *Summary of the Argument*

In this cycle of colloquies, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar present, from somewhat different points of view, their side of the controversy, while Job answers each at length.

1. Eliphaz begins with marked courtesy, assuming that Job is sincerely pious, and has led an upright life, but has become disheartened because he has not put sufficient confidence in the value of piety, or in the necessary result of righteous conduct. As he has himself helped many who were in similar trouble, he should not now, when it has touched him, let go his trust in revealed truth. Eliphaz can appeal to divine revelation. For once when he was in an ecstatic state he had a vision which brought him assurance. A spirit stood before him and proclaimed the fact that man cannot be just and pure before his maker who cannot trust even his heavenly council, and finds fault with his angels. If it is true of all men that they are sinful, and therefore also quickly pass away, how much more true of the irreverent and foolish man who endangers his life by angrily raving against God! He is sure to perish. The only proper thing to do is to submit to God, who does wonderful things. Job should feel that such a correction as has been given him is for his good. For God wounds and he binds up also, and saves the righteous in famine, war, and pestilence. Surely Job will come out of all his troubles, live long, and be prosperous.

2. In his reply, Job maintains that his anger is not excessive in view of the fate that has befallen him. It is the enormity of his affliction that causes the rashness of his speech. He is pursued by God himself with poisoned arrows, and knows full well what ails him. Let the Almighty crush him then; he cannot long endure. The friends are like those river-beds that have no water in the hot season, and deceive the traveller who comes to them to slake his thirst. It is not fair, he holds, to censure words. Cries that come from despairing hearts should be allowed without criticism to be carried away by the wind. It is his own judgment which he trusts, that tells him something is radically wrong. His misery is great, and hope there is none. Man's life vanishes quickly, and soon the divine eye will seek in vain for the one who has passed away forever. Why give to him such exaggerated attention? He certainly is not a dangerous mythological creature like the primeval ocean. It is doing too much honor to man to visit him daily and test him all the time. Why cannot God pardon the sin, if sin has been committed? Would it not be in his own interest to do so? For Job will be gone when his maker shall look eagerly for his handiwork.

3. Bildad cannot, after this speech, address Job with the courtesy of Eliphaz. He finds it preposterous that the Almighty should be charged with injustice. But he does not hurl the accusation of wrongdoing against Job personally. It is probably the sons who have sinned, and if he

is himself pure and just, his prosperity will be restored. Then Bildad makes his appeal to the tradition of the past, the wise sayings of former generations handed down from father to son, all to the effect that the wicked man very quickly comes to grief, while the just will, in the end, rejoice and see the discomfiture and shame of his enemies.

4. Job freely acknowledges that a man cannot be just with God, and that if God should begin to inquire, he would not be able to answer one of a thousand questions. He is great in wisdom and in power, does things unawares, and cannot be restrained by any one, and does not have to give an account of what it pleases him to do. He can pour out his fury terribly. In days of old when the female chaos-monster, called Rahab, with her helpers sought to overthrow the power of the gods, these mighty friends were bowed beneath him. Nothing would compel such a powerful being to answer; and though Job were absolutely innocent, he might be condemned. He brings to naught just and unjust, for this certainly cannot be ascribed to any one else. In a pestilence men perish, whether they are good or bad, but it does not seem to concern him. There is no arbiter that can adjudicate between Job and God, that can free Job from the fear which unmans him. He can but protest or plead, say to God: "Thou shalt not condemn me!" or remind him of the process by which he fashioned, and the care with which he watched him. Was it all in order to reveal on him the boundless strength of

divine power? Job closes with expressing his desire to be left alone to have some cheer before he goes to the realms of death.

5. Zophar, apparently the youngest of the friends, shows least consideration for Job's feelings. He characterizes him at the outset as a man of lips and a babbler, regards as an outrage his claim to have led a reproachless life, and expresses a desire that God himself might speak, showing how wise and powerful he is. Only if Job will repent of his sin, and put it away, does Zophar think that a change in his fortune can be brought about.

6. Job's reply to Zophar possesses a pathos deeper than any other part of the dialogues. His appeal is to his own subjective judgment. The ear examines words, as the palate food. As to the power of God and his knowledge, he can say as much as the friends. What they know he knows; and what is more, his own eye has seen it and his own ear heard it. He is wearied of presenting his arguments to these patchers up of lies, and desires to speak to God. He knows that this is dangerous. God might slay him. But the fact that no hypocrite would show such eagerness to meet him is itself a ground of confidence. Provided he is not overcome by sheer force or unmanned by fear, he is ready for the encounter, to answer questions, or to ask them. Job asks why God hides his face from him, since the life of man at best is so short and full of unrest, till he must pass into the silent. And beyond the

grave there is no hope. How gladly would he stand upon his sentinel's post in hell, if a change could ever come, if a man could die and live again, if God, having a yearning for his own handiwork, could call him back again. But it cannot be, and Job declines to base his argument upon so unstable a foundation.

### 3. *The Value of this Cycle of Discussion*

This round of discussion does not carry the reader very far on his way. It reveals the attitude and animus of the friends, and shows likewise that Job is deeply perplexed, yet absolutely sincere. Not even for his own advantage, or for any other reason, will he speak other than the exact truth concerning himself. So far as he can see, God is dealing unjustly with him. He cannot see a way out of his troubles. God is so much above him that there cannot even be an intermediary or advocate (9 : 32, 33), who might bring them together. He despairs because there seems to be no way of pleading his own cause before God. He feels absolutely helpless. The friends, assuming, as they do, that he has committed sin, give him no assistance or comfort. He knows that he is guiltless of intentional sin (9 : 6), and will not confess to that of which he is not conscious. But in this he lays a basis for his future assurance.

# V

## SECOND CYCLE OF DIALOGUES
(*Chaps.* 15–21)

### 1. *The Translation*

#### (1) *Eliphaz's Discourse* (*chap.* 15)

Does a sage speak so foolishly,
Filling his belly with the wind,
Reasoning with words availing naught,
With speeches that possess no force?

Such foolish talk as yours undermines religion and betrays your character (15 : 1–6)

Thou true religion undermin'st,
Disturbst devotion before God.
Thy wickedness inspires thy speech,
And wily language thou dost choose.

Wert thou born as the first of men?
Wert thou brought forth ere angels were?
Dost thou attend councils on high?
Dost thou obtain thy wisdom there?

Is your judgment better than that of the elders who were here before strangers came? (15 : 7–19)

What knowest thou that we know not?
What is thy insight we have not?
Amongst us is a man of years,
Much older than thy father is.

Spurnst thou the comfort granted thee,
The word in mercy sent to thee?
Why art thou led astray by wrath,
And wherefore dost thou roll thine eyes?

Thy mouth condemns thee, and not I.
Thy lips bear witness against thee.
For against God thy anger turns,
Rebellion issues from thy mouth.

What is man that he should be clean,
The woman-born that he be just?
He cannot trust his Holy Ones,
The heavens before him are not pure,

Much less the wretched and corrupt,
Man who like water drinks in sin.
I will instruct thee, listen thou!
What I have seen I will disclose,

That which wise men were wont to say,
And what their fathers did not hide,
Who in the land sat undisturbed,
To whom no stranger yet had come:

They declare that the evil doer receives his just penalty (15 : 20–35)

"The wicked suffers all his days,
The few years the oppressor lives,
Voices of terror fill his ears,
In peace the spoiler falls on him.

"He cannot come forth from the dark,
He for the sword's edge is marked out,
He is preserved for vulture's food,
He feels the fate approaching him.

"The day of darkness frightens him,
Distress and anguish seize on him,
What he is fond of strangers take,
His substance never can endure.

"He strikes not in the earth his root,
Nor can his branches spread abroad.
The heat dries up his tender shoots,
The winds sweep all his blossoms off.

"His trunk is rotting ere its time,
His branches do not green remain;
He casts forth like a vine his grapes,
Strews blossoms like the olive-tree.

"For barren are the godless ones,
And fire devours the bribers' tents.
Who conceives sin brings trouble forth,
Illusive fruit the womb matures."

(2) *Job's Reply* (*chaps.* 16–17)

Have done with your lip-comforting; I would be more helpful to you (16 : 1–6)

I have heard many things like these.
Ye all are wretched comforters.
Is there an end to words of wind?
What has provoked thee to speak thus?

As you, so could I also speak,
If you were only in my place.
Fine phrases I could hurl at you;
And I could shake at you my head.

I could use words to strengthen you,
Sustain you with lip-sympathy,
Could speak and never spare the grief
That would remain when I were through.

God has attacked me fiercely; I am humbled and sick (16 : 7–17)

But he has made me weak and dazed,
And all my pain has wasted me.
As witness rising against me
The awful plague accuses me.

His anger tears and pulls me down,
He gnashes on me with his teeth.
I was at ease—he shattered me,
Seized by the neck and threw me down.

He as a target set me up,
His arrows shot me round about.

He cleft unsparingly my reins,
And poured my gall upon the ground.

He broke me through, breach upon breach,
In soldier's fashion ran on me,
Though in my hands no violence was,
And ev'n my speech was without fault.

I sackcloth put upon my skin,
And thrust my horn into the dust.
My face was red from flowing tears,
And dark lines lay about my eyes.

Cover not thou, O earth, my blood!
Let my cry find no resting-place!
Behold in heaven my witness is,
My advocate who dwells on high.

O that God would be my friendly, heavenly witness (16 : 18–21)

O that God would come forth—my friend!
My eyes would pour out tears to him,
That he would plead for man with God,
As mortal man pleads for his friend.

Not many are the coming years,
And I shall go and not return,
My breath be spent, my day be fled,
Only the grave be left for me.

Life will be brief; will God be my surety? alas my hope is gone (16 : 22–17 : 7, 11–16)

Surely, illusions are my lot,
On bitter facts my eye must rest.
O by thy side lay down my pledge.
Who else for me would surety be?

A byword thou hast made of me,
A laughing-stock to men I am.
My eye from sorrow has grown dim,
And like a shadow are my limbs.

My days depart without a hope,
The wishes of my heart are gone.
The night I into day have made,
To darkness has my light been turned.

Have I a hope? Hell is my home!
There in the dark I spread my bed.
"My mother!" to the grave I call,
And to the worm "My sister!" say.

Where, then, is still for me a hope?
My welfare, who can still see it?
With me to the nether world they go,
They rest together in the dust.

(3) *Bildad's Discourse* (*chap.* 18)

When will an end to these words come?
Be silent thou, and let me speak.
Why are we thought like witless brutes,
Considered as vile beasts by thee?

Thy godlessness seems shocking and thy bearing insolent (18; 1–3; 17: 8–10; 18: 4)

The righteous shudder at this case,
The pure are shocked by godlessness,
His way the just man still maintains,
And stronger grows the clean of hands.

But thou return, present thyself,
Who dost thyself in anger tear!
Will earth become a wilderness
And rocks be moved on thy account?

For the bad man the light goes out,
The flame of his fire glows no more;
The lamp is darkened in his tent,
The lantern shines not in his place.

Wicked men perish, their plans are frustrated, their bodies diseased, they pass into oblivion (18: 5–21)

And straitened are his mighty strides,
His clever plans have ruined him;
His foot has in the net been caught,
Over a pitfall he does walk.

Upon his heel a trap lays hold,
He by a snare is firmly seized,

A cord for him in hiding is,
Upon his pathway lies a noose.

Terrors surround and frighten him,
They follow on his every step;
Ruin is hungry for his life,
Destruction waiting for his fall.

Death's first-born son his body eats,
And to the King of Terrors leads.
Within his tent does Belial dwell,
With brimstone covered is his house.

Below, his roots are all dried up;
Above, his branches withered all.
He is forgotten on the earth,
His name is never mentioned there.

Into the dark he must go down,
An exile, driven from the world;
He neither offspring has nor child,
No remnant in his people left.

The West stands shuddering at him,
The East with horror is convulsed.
Such are the tents of wicked men,
The houses of the godless ones.

(4) *Job's Reply* (*chap.* 19)

How long will ye torment my soul,
With speeches try to shatter me,
Reproaching me repeatedly,
Nothing ashamed to act like foes?

**How long will you attack me in this fashion? (19 : 1–5)**

Ye verily your greatness prove
In that ye reason out my shame.
But know, 'tis God who has done wrong,
He has his net upon me thrown.

None hears my cry of "Violence!"
None heeds when I for justice call.
My way he stops—I cannot pass,
He darkness throws across my paths.

**God is dealing with me as with an enemy (19 : 6–12)**

My glory he removes from me,
He takes from off my head the crown.
He breaks me down, and I am gone;
My hope he roots up like a tree.

His fury rises against me,
He treats me like an enemy.
His troops come marching in on me,
They form a camp about my tent.

My kinsfolk and acquaintances shun my presence; my servants, even my family, abhor me (19 : 13–22)

My brothers keep away from me,
Acquaintances are strangers now,
My kinsmen recognize me not,
Guests of the house recall me not.

A stranger am I to my maids,
An alien whom their eyes behold.
I call my slave—he hears me not,
And for his favors I must plead.

My breath is loathsome to my wife,
My odor to my children vile;
The little ones show disrespect,
If I arise, they jeer at me.

My warmest friends abhor me now,
My loved ones all against me turn,
Under my skin the flesh decays,
My very teeth are falling out.

But let this be rock-graven! God will be my Vindicator, my Witness. Be warned that punishment does not overtake you (19 : 23–29)

O pity, pity me, my friends!
Me the Almighty's hand has touched.
Wherefore pursue ye me like God?
Have ye not of my flesh your fill?

O that my words were written down,
Were in a book recorded well,
With iron pen and lead engraved
Upon the rock forevermore!

I know that my redeemer lives,
In days to come he will avenge;
Then will he rise upon the dust,
My witness who has watched this case.

God will himself proclaim me pure,
Whom I within my soul descry,
My eyes behold, though none else sees;
My reins within me are consumed.

"Let us pursue him," so ye say,
"For in himself the fault is found."
Let on you fall fear of the sword!
For "wrath the wicked overtakes."

(5) *Zophar's Discourse* (*chap.* 20)

I regret such senseless argument (20 : 1–3)

Not so my thought conceives this case,
My mind by it is greatly stirred.
Reproachful words I must needs hear,
And answers from a senseless breath.

All history illustrates the brevity of the wicked man's success (20 : 4–11)

Know'st thou not from of old this fact,
Since man was planted on the earth?
Brief is the wicked man's success,
But for a moment is his joy.

Though to the heavens he ascend,
And to the clouds his head should reach,

He vanishes as does the smoke,
And "Where is he?" his friends exclaim.

He like a dream flies, with no trace,
Like nightly spectre he is gone.
Full of youth's vigor were his bones;
His strength lies with him in the dust.

**He gets no pleasure from his experience, and suffers in every way (20 : 12–29)**

How sweet is evil to his mouth!
He hides it well beneath his tongue,
Saves it and will not let it go,
But in his palate holds it fast.

Then is his food within him changed,
The gall of adders it becomes;
The swallowed wealth he must throw up,
And from his belly drive it forth.

Poison of asps he will suck in,
He will be slain by adder's tongue.
He will not see the cheerful brooks,
With milk and honey flowing streams.

He cannot use the wealth he made,
Or pleasure from his gain derive.
He robbed the needy and oppressed,
Seized houses built by other men.

He is not safe through Mammon's aid,
Cannot escape through hoarded wealth.
Straitened he is in spite of means,
And on him falls calamity.

God vents his anger upon him,
Showers his wrath upon his head;
Besets him with his terrors dread.
Yea, darkness is laid up for him.

A fire not blown will burn him up,
And waste what in his tent remains.
The heavens will not hide his guilt,
And against him the earth appears.

His house destruction sweeps away.
A curse on him when his day comes!
That is the wicked man's reward,
The heritage which God pays him.

(6) *Job's Reply* (*chap.* 21)

Let me explain the terrible facts I see (21 : 1–6)

Hear ye, O hear the words I speak!
Let this be comfort granted me!
Suffer me freely to explain!
Ye surely will not mock me then.

Is my complaint of men alone?
Wherefore must I be patient still?

Turn, look at me, and be amazed,
And then in silence shut your mouth!

I shudder, when I give it thought,
A tremor seizes on my flesh:
Why do the wicked flourish so,
Grow old and also gain in strength?

**The wicked often flourish and are happy all their life (21 : 6–13)**

They are allowed to see their seed,
Their offspring is established well;
Their peaceful home has naught to fear,
God's chastening rod is not on them.

Their bull fails not, when gendering,
Their cow aborts not when she calves;
Like lambs they send their babies forth,
Their children ever dance and play.

To harp and tambourine they sing,
And at the sound of pipes rejoice,
In welfare they complete their day,
And in a moment they pass hence.

**They even defy God (21 : 14, 15)**

Yet they to God exclaimed: "Depart!
We have no wish to know thy ways.
What is the Lord whom we should serve?
What would we gain, if we should pray?"

Is not their fortune in their hands?
God is not in their plans concerned.
How often does their lamp go out,
Or upon them destruction fall?

They should be seized upon by traps,
He should ensnare them in his wrath;
They should be like the wind-swept straw,
Like chaff that's scattered by the storm.

As for your proverbial sayings about their misfortunes, experience does not confirm them (21 : 16–34)

"God lays up evils for his sons."
The man himself should punished be;
Destruction his own eyes should see,
And of God's anger he should taste.

What does he for his household care,
When numbered are his months on earth?
Is knowledge to be taught to God,
Whose wisdom judges those on high?

One in the midst of plenty dies,
In deepest quiet and at ease;
Of fatness full his body is,
Upon his bones the marrow moist.

Another dies in bitterness,
Who never knew the joy of life.
They rest together in the dust,
And on their corpses crawl the worms.

Behold, I know full well your thought,
By which you think to prove me wrong:
"Where is the palace of the strong,
The tent wherein the wicked dwelt?"

Why ask ye not of wayfarers,
And learn what they have seen and heard;
How oft the wicked man escapes,
Is saved when comes the day of wrath?

Who, then, rebukes him for his life,
And who requites him for his deeds?
When he is taken to his grave,
A watch is stationed at his tomb.

So sweetly lie the valley's clods;
And all men march to honor him.
How vain is all your comforting!
How futile all your answers are!

### 2. *Summary of the Argument*

1. Eliphaz begins the second cycle of the dialogues in a far different spirit from that in which he opened the discussion. He charges Job with supreme folly, represents him as a man who undermines true religion and disturbs devotion before God, and intimates that the source of his wily and disrespectful language is the deep-seated corrup-

tion within. Job speaks as though he had all the wisdom of the protoplast, nay, of the angels themselves; as though he obtained his knowledge by attending the councils in heaven. Yet Eliphaz is older than Job's father. Why should he scorn the word that came by divine inspiration, contained all that was necessary to see the whole matter in its right light, and was so mercifully sent to him for his illumination and comfort? The trouble seems to Eliphaz to be that the wisdom of the fathers has been forgotten, and for this the foreigner was responsible. When the people no longer sat undisturbed in the land, but the stranger came, he brought with him his new ideas. Eliphaz feels the essentially foreign attitude of Job. Against this foreign thought he marshals in impressive array the wise sayings handed down by tradition concerning the sure punishment in this life of the evil doer as the ripest fruits of human observation.

2. Job has heard all these things before. They do not touch the issue at stake, they bring no relief to his mind. The fine phrases give no assistance in solving his problem; the lip-sympathy carries no warmth to his heart. He continues his charge against the Almighty, whom he represents as a soldier waging war against him. Let his innocent blood, then, cry out, like Abel's, to heaven for vengeance. But to whom in heaven? Here the remarkable idea presents itself to his mind of a God, his witness and advocate on high, pleading with the God who is unjustly

afflicting him as a mortal man may plead for his friend. It is the new God, his God, beginning to differentiate himself from the God of tradition championed by the friends. Will he go surety for him? He hopes so. But the outlook is dark. The road leads to the nether world, in which there is no light. The term "hell," as a rendering of the Hebrew *Sheol*, is used, as by our pagan ancestors, of the abode of all the dead, whether good or bad.

3. Bildad has no understanding for Job's point of view. All that he hears is the blasphemy of the man who maintains that he is right, and accuses the Almighty of wrong. He falls back once more upon the sayings of wise men in regard to the terrible things that surround on all sides and are in store for the wicked. The imagery is rich. Death's first-born son is leprosy, the King of Terrors, of course, death itself, and Belial a monster of the lower world. "An exile, driven from the world" is as effective a picture as that of the personified West, which stands shuddering at the wicked.

4. The insensibility to his suffering, and to the terrible problem that agitates his mind, fills the soul of Job with keenest pain. The estrangement of his friends and acquaintances, the indignities heaped upon him by servants, the sense of being an object to be shunned by wife and children, are dwelt on, the poet temporarily forgetting that in the old legend all of Job's children had died. The

bootless cry for pity from his friends, leads his thought to the judgment of posterity, and he first thinks of the desirability of a documentary record of his case. But a book-roll would perish, and even the rock would wear away. In the end the thought must revert to the God whom his eyes have beheld, his witness who shall be his avenger. In days to come he will avenge. He will rise upon the dust and proclaim his integrity. No other eyes than his have seen this God, but the thought of him stirs his whole nature. There is no question of a theophany in the old sense. Nor is there any hint of survival after death, or a resurrection. How strongly his thought is occupied with his vindication before the world is seen by the last stanza, which is a warning to the upholders of the traditional view that the tables may be turned, and their own so oft-repeated phrase apply to themselves. There is no change of tone in the remainder of the poem. The situation remains unchanged, the arguments continue to be the same on both sides. The famous passage is not climactic in the sense generally supposed. It throws some light on the God-conception, none on the idea of the future beyond the grave, cherished by the poet.

5. Zophar's discourse does not refer to the ideas expressed by Job. Only the last stanza left something of its sting. He takes his refuge in the testimony of all history as read by him, and presents one more picture of the awful fate of the godless.

6. Job's reply raises more definitely the question as to the correctness of the generalization of the friends than has been done hitherto. He shudders himself when he realizes the full significance of the facts he cannot help seeing. Why do the wicked flourish? They often prosper even to the end. And yet they cared nothing for God's law or service. They should be punished, but they are not. It is not sufficient to say that God stores up evil for their children. What do they care for their children, if they can escape themselves? And what justice is it to punish the children for what the parents have done? When the wicked man is honored to the last, and lies peacefully buried, what retributive justice has been operative in his case?

### 3. *The Value of the Discussion.*

This round of discussion has served to show that the friends are more concerned over saving God's face than over reaching the exact truth. They are indignant at Job and reproach him for his attitude, yet do not really touch the problem which vexes his soul. They repeat again the wise sayings of the elders and the testimony of history. Their method is still somewhat indirect. They set forth the fate of the wicked in such a way as to let Job see that the portrayal fits his case.

Naturally Job is not relieved by such comfort. In his closing rejoinder he flatly denies the relevancy or accuracy

of their statements, declaring that, as a matter of experience, wicked men often flourish throughout life and escape punishment for their evil deeds. In his own thinking, he makes some important progress. He conjectures that God may be a witness of all that has befallen him, and that he will declare the truth on his behalf (16 : 19). He goes further and declares (19 : 25, 26) that God will surely vindicate him at some time, acting as a friend. Thus his new conception of God begins to help Job out of his perplexity.

## VI

### THIRD CYCLE OF DIALOGUES
(*Chaps.* 22–31)

### 1. *The Translation*

#### (1) *Eliphaz's Discourse* (*chap.* 22)

Does God punish men for goodness? (22 : 1–4)

Does God from man profit derive?
The wise gains only for himself.
Thy goodness, does it meet his need?
Thy justice, is it gain to him?

Is godly fear punished by him?
Art thou rebuked for piety?
Or is not thy corruption great,
And thy transgression limitless?

You must have been unscrupulous and without mercy (22 : 5–11)

Thou wouldst for no cause take a pawn,
And strip the naked of his clothes,
The thirsty man a drink refuse,
And from the famished bread withhold.

Thou, strong of arm, didst own the land,
And didst in honor live on it.
Yet, robbed, the widow left thy house,
And broken was the orphan's arm.

For this cause snares around thee were,
And fear brought terror suddenly;
Thy tent's light into darkness turned,
And thee a flood of waters drenched.

You thought that God would take no notice (22 : 12–20)

"What does God know?" so thoughtest thou,
"Can he discern through heavy clouds?
Clouds cover him, he nothing sees,
He walks beyond the bounds of earth."

Wilt thou thus walk the paths of old
That wicked men did follow once,
Who came to an untimely end.
O'er their foundation swept a flood.

The righteous saw it and rejoiced,
A byword made of them the pure:
"Our enemies have been destroyed,
Their remnant has the fire consumed."

Make peace with him and friendship, thou,
In this way good shall come to thee;
And take instruction from his mouth,
And in thy heart lay up his words.

Submit to God with humility and he will prosper you (22 : 21–30)

If thou to God dost humbly turn,
Removest evil from thy tents,
Thou shalt in God thy pleasure have,
And thou shalt lift thy face to him.

Thou then shalt pray and he shall hear,
Thou unto him shalt pay thy vows.
Established shall be all thy plans,
And on thy path the light shall shine.

For he brings low the high and proud,
And those of downcast eyes he helps,
The good man's longings he fulfils,
Delivers those whose hands are clean.

(2) *Job's Reply* (*chap.* 23)

My plaint is bitter even now,
His hand produces heavy sighs,
O that I could but come to him,
Ascend to where his throne is set!

Oh, if I could only plead my cause before God himself (23 : 1–5)

Before him I would lay my cause,
And fill my mouth with arguments,

Learn what he had to answer me,
And mark the things that he would say.

Would he fight me with violence?
Nay, he would give an ear to me.
A righteous man would plead with him,
And from my judge I should escape.

He would know that I am righteous and obedient (23 : 6–12)

He knows the way that I have walked,
As gold when tried I should come forth.
For to his step my foot held fast,
And without fail his way I kept.

He works His will. I am helpless and afraid (23 : 13–17)

From his command I have not swerved,
Hid in my heart was his mouth's word.
But he—whoe'er can him restrain?
He does whatever he desires.

He carries out this plan of his,
And many others of the kind.
With trembling, therefore, I am seized;
When I reflect, I am afraid.

Courage God takes away from me,
The Most High fills my heart with fear.
By darkness I am swallowed up,
My face is covered with deep gloom.

(3) *Vagabonds and Culprits: An interpolation* (*chap.* 24)

This chapter consists of four short poems: (1) vs. 1–4; (2) vs. 5–12; (3) vs. 13–18a; (4) vs. 18b–24. The first is a lament over the delay in the judgment of the wicked. The poor are oppressed; and those who know the Lord are eagerly looking for "the day of God," his coming to avenge the sufferers. The second is a description of vagabonds forced from their home by misfortune and degenerating into a criminal class preying on society. The third refers to a more desperate category of thieves, burglars, murderers, and adulterers plying their nefarious trade in the dark. And the fourth pictures an especially wicked criminal whose punishment is momentarily expected. They are all written in tristichs, a metre not used by the author of the dialogues, and form an interpolation, probably made in the second century, as has been explained on p. 94 of the introduction to Job.

(4) *Bildad's Discourse* (*chaps.* 25 : 2–6 ; 26 : 5–14)

How immeasurably inferior is man to God! (25 : 2–6)

Power and terror are with him,
Who in his heavens can make peace.
His troops, what man can number them?
His light, on whom does it not shine?

How could a man be in the right,
A mortal clean before his God?

Even the moon—it does not shine,
And in his sight stars are not pure.

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: 7–14)

The mighty giants are in pain,
Who far beneath the waters dwell;
Naked lies hell before his eyes,
And Tartarus no cover has.

Stretched over Chaos lies the north;
He has on nothing hung the earth.
Within his cloud he waters binds,
Yet by them is not rent the cloud.

His throne's foundations he did fix,
And over it he spread his cloud,
A circle drew upon the sea,
Where light and darkness were to meet.

The pillars of the heavens rocked,
Startled and shocked at his rebuke;
He by his power quelled the sea,
He ravished Rahab by his skill.

The skies were brightened by his breath,
And he the Flying Serpent pierced.
These are the outlines of his ways;
A whisper only do we hear.

(5) *Job's Reply* (*chap.* 27 : 1–5)

As God lives who has done me wrong,
Has filled with bitterness my soul,
My lips speak not what is perverse,
My tongue has uttered no false word.

God has wronged me; I speak the truth; I cannot plead guilty (27 : 1–5)

I will not grant that you are right,
Will not plead guilty until death.
My breath is still within me whole,
God's spirit in my nostrils dwells.

(6) *Zophar's Discourse* (*chap.* 27 : 7–23)

May my foe like the wicked be,
My enemy like the unjust!
For where is for the sinner hope,
When God demands of him his soul?

Can a sinner expect to have God listen to him? (27 : 7–10)

Will God then listen to his cry,
When sorrow's hour upon him comes?
Will in the Most High he exult,
And call at all times on his God?

I will inform thee of God's strength,
Nor hide from thee his mighty deeds.
This is the portion of the bad,
Of tyrants this the heritage:

The wicked man will lose his children, his property, his very life; men will rejoice at his fate (27 : 11–23)

His sons grow up to be sword's prey,
His offspring find no food to eat,
His remnant gets no burial,
No mourning do his widows make.

He gathers silver as the dust,
And as the clay he heaps up clothes;
The righteous will his garments wear,
The poor his silver will divide.

He builds his houses for the moth,
Like booths that watchmen make themselves,
Rich he lies down—does not remain;
Opens his eyes—and then is gone.

A havoc-making flood drowns him,
A nightly storm whirls him away;
The East-wind lifts him up, hurls him,
And drives him far from where he was.

It presses him, and spares him not,
Before its power he must flee.
Over his fall men clap their hands,
And hiss him as he leaves his place.

(7) *The Home of Wisdom: An interpolation* (*chap.* 28)

Where is the home of wisdom?
Where is the place of knowledge?
A vein there is for silver,
A place where gold is washed out;
Iron from dust is taken,
And stone to brass is molten.
To utmost bounds man searches
For stone in deepest darkness,
Breaks shafts as he advances,
Descends, on a rope swinging.
The earth, from which the food comes,
Below by fire is wasted;
Among its stones are sapphires,
And clods of gold are on them.

Where may the divine wisdom be found? (28 : 1–3)

Many things hidden in the earth are brought to light by man (28 : 4–6)

Where is the home of wisdom?
Where is the place of knowledge?
The vulture knows the path not,
The eagle does not see it.
The proud beasts step not in it,
The lion in it walks not.
Man's hand seizes the firm rocks,
Upturns the roots of mountains,
Breaks passages through stone walls,

But no creature knows the way that leads to the home of wisdom (28 : 7–11)

Explores the deepest channels.
His eye sees what is precious,
And brings to light the hidden;
He searches to the earth's ends,
Scans all things under heaven.

Where is the home of wisdom?
Where is the place of knowledge?
Neither earth nor sea can reveal its hiding-place; and no treasures obtained by men can pay the price of it (28 : 12–19)
The way to it man knows not,
It is not in the earth found.
"'Tis not in me," the sea says;
The ocean says: "Not with me."
Fine gold is not paid for it,
Nor silver weighed against it.
Not Ophir gold can buy it,
Nor onyx stone nor sapphire.
Not precious glass its price is,
Nor its exchange gold vases.
Corals and crystals count not,
Nor pearls nor Cushite topaz.

Where is the home of wisdom?
Where is the place of knowledge?
Death and the nether world must confess that they know it only by hear-say (28 : 20–22)
Hid from all living beings,
Concealed from birds of heaven.
Abyss and death confess it:
"We only heard a rumor."

God to its home the way knew,
Its dwelling-place discovered,
When to the wind he weight gave,
And measured out the waters,
When he made for the rain law,
A way for flash of thunder.
Then he saw and approved it,
And tried it as a model.

But God knew where its home was, when he used it in the creation of the world (28 : 23–27)

The poet's question "Wisdom, where may it be found, where is the place of knowledge?" beginning the third and fourth strophes, verses 12 and 20, originally, no doubt, began the first and second strophes as well, and are to be inserted before verses 1 and 7, as has been suggested by Professor Duhm. In verse 3 "an end he puts to darkness" is a gloss, possibly referring to the miner's lamp. The terms *nahal*, wadi, river-bed, verse 4, and *yeorim*, Nile arms, and *neharoth*, channels, verse 10, are not inappropriately used of the shafts and passages cut by the miner in the mountain. "With a stranger" (perhaps "with the aid of foreigners") and "the forgotten ones" are clearly glosses. Verse 24 should be transferred to the end of the second strophe. In verse 27 "he set it up and searched it out" implies that, having examined and approved it, he placed its suggestions before him as a model, traced out its design, tested its potentialities, in the actual work of creation. Verse 28 is an obvious addition. The

wisdom hidden from all living beings and only discovered by God himself when he created the world is not "the fear of the Lord."

In the Hellenistic period the Palestinian Jews became familiar with the Greek speculations concerning Sophia, or the divine wisdom. It was not the personification of a divine attribute, but the rationalization of a mythical concept. The relations of Zeus to Demeter, Kore-Proserpina, and Pallas Athena called for allegorical exegesis; the virgin-spouse, the unmothered goddess of wisdom, became wisdom itself, and the same process may be seen in Egyptian and Oriental cults. Not only in Gnosticism, but in many systems of speculative thought, mythical remnants were leff indicating the origin. In this chapter, as in Prov. 8 : 22 ff., Wisdom is a personality distinct from God. Here she has her abode in a hidden place known to no creature, but discovered by God. His visit to her is connected with the great primeval event, the separation of sea and land, leading to the creation of all things on the earth. God gives weight to the wind; his breath evidently blows with tremendous force on the waters. He metes out the waters with a measure; having laid bare the dry land, he fixes the limits of the ocean, and regulates the supply of rain. This initial creative act suggests all that follows. The supreme worth of Wisdom is demonstrated. Seen and examined, standing before him and searched through and through, it is approved and vindi-

cated. In Prov. 8 : 22 ff. Wisdom is also present at the creation of the world. But there she is chiefly rejoicing, as one thing after another appears. She laughs and plays before God, and sports with the sons of God (we should probably read *bene elim* for *bene adam*, in verse 31), who themselves are rejoicing and singing together.

This Divine Wisdom is beyond man's reach. Into the deepest recesses of the mountains he goes in search of silver and gold, iron, copper, and precious stones. But to the home of wisdom he comes not. The birds of heaven may see far, and the proud beasts of the desert wander in many places untrodden by man's foot. In search of gain, man may go to the ends of the earth, and scan everything under heaven. But wisdom's home is not in the earth, nor in the ocean. All the wealth gained by man cannot buy it. And even the world below where the shades dwell only hears a rumor of its excellence. God keeps the secret of its abode.

This chapter contains the only description of mining operations that has come down to us from Hebrew antiquity. The author may have seen them in the Lebanon district, at Phainon (*kalat Fenan*) in Mt. Seir, or on the Sinaitic peninsula. The onyx, or *shoham*-stone (Assyrian *samtu*), may have been a malachite found on the Sinaitic peninsula, and the sapphire may have been the lapis lazuli, so often brought by Babylonian kings from the same district, or north-western Arabia. Though the chapter is

clearly an interpolation, and scarcely is older than the beginning of the second century B. C., it is not without marked poetic beauty, and is significant as an early indication of that tendency of thought which brought in so many important intermediaries between the Most High and man. Each of the four strophes are made of three tetrastichs, prefaced by the same distich.

(8) *Job's Reply* (*chaps.* 29–31)

In former days God was my friend, and I was prosperous (29 : 1–6)

The months of old, where are they now,
The days when God watched over me,
When over me his lamp did shine,
His light above me in the dark,

The days when I was prosperous,
When God my tent protected well?
I washed myself in thick milk then,
And streams of oil poured from the rock.

I was respected by young and old alike, by princes and nobles (29 : 7–10)

When I went up to the town-gate,
Or I was seated in the square,
Youth saw me—quickly disappeared,
Old men arose, stood on their feet.

Right in their speeches princes paused,
And laid their hands upon their mouth.
Hushed was the voice of noble men,
And to their palate clave their tongue.

Ear heard and—praised me happy then,
Eye saw and—testified to this,
That sufferers I gave my aid,
The orphan and the needy helped.

I helped the suffering and blessed the poor and gave justice to all (29 : 11–17)

The hungry I did blessings bring,
I made the widow's heart rejoice,
Right was the turban on my head,
I Justice as a mantle wore.

To guide the blind I was his eyes,
And to the lame I was his foot,
A father was I to the poor,
I for the stranger justice sought.

I brake the wicked tyrant's fangs,
And from his teeth I snatched the prey,
"I in my nest shall die," thought I,
"And as the phœnix be long-lived.

I hoped to continue such practices all my life (29 : 18–25)

"My root toward the waters spreads,
Dew falls all night upon my branch.
Fresh is my glory every day,
And in my hand my bow is firm."

They listened, waited for my word,
My counsel they in silence heard.
When I had finished, they spake not,
My speech had its effect on them.

**But now I am mocked by every one, and attacked as an enemy (30 : 1–15)**

But now they only mock at me,
A byword I am now to them.
They with abhorrence turn aside
And dare to spit into my face.

My cord they loose and bend me down,
Throw off the bridle of restraint,
Rise as an army by my side,
Prepare their strategies for me.

My pathway they completely spoil,
Destroy the road on which I walked;
Surround me with their archers swift,
Break in as rushing through a breach.

Under the crash they then roll in,
And turn their terrors upon me.
My fortune goes like wind that blows,
My glory passes like a cloud.

**I suffer excruciating tortures (30 : 16–19)**

My soul within me is poured out,
My day of sorrow has arrived.
My bones are pierced by ghoulish night,
My gnawing pains are not asleep.

My skin is by a strong force pinched,
As tunic's collar it is tight.
God throws me down into the mire,
Like dust and ashes I am hurled.

God seems to have become my enemy (30 : 20–23)

I cry—thou hearest not my voice;
Unmoved thou only look'st at me;
Thou hast become an enemy,
Most fiercely dost thou combat me.

Thou mak'st the wind my chariot,
And beyond help dissolvest me;
To death, I know, thou leadest me,
The home where all the living meet.

I find no helper, no relief (30 : 24–31)

Will not the drowning man stretch out
His hand and for assistance cry?
Laments not he whose day is hard,
And is the perishing not grieved?

I looked for good, and evil came;
I longed for light, and gloom ensued.
My bowels boil, they are not still:
For days of anguish hold me fast.

Dark am I, but not from the sun.
I rise up in the crowd and cry:
"Of jackals I a brother am,
Of ostriches a relative!"

My blackened skin falls off from me,
My bones are burning up with heat.
A mourning wail takes my harp's place,
To sorrow's voice my pipe is used.

God knows that I am not an evil-doer (31 : 1–4)

I made a compact with my eyes
Never to look upon a maid.
What else would God's allotment be,
And from on high his heritage?

For wicked men destruction sure,
For evil-doers ruin swift.
Does he not all my way behold?
Does he not number all my steps?

Let Him judge my freedom from deceit (30 : 5, 6)

If I in vanity have walked,
And if my foot to wrong made haste,
Let God in balances weigh me,
That I am guiltless he will see.

My uprightness, my unstained honor (31 : 7–12)

If from the way my step has turned,
And if my eye my heart beguiled,
Then let me sow, another eat,
And perish may my sprouted grass!

If e'er bewitched by woman's grace,
A spy I played at neighbor's door,
Let my wife grind for others grist,
Over her form let others crouch!

Shame this would be, apostasy,
A crime for judges to deal with:
A fire to hell pursuing me,
Consuming all my substance here.

I ne'er my slave's right have despised,
Or slave-girl's, quarrelling with me.
Who fashioned me made him as well,
Within the womb he formed us both.

My fairness, my generosity (31 : 13–18)

If I should turn the poor man down,
Or cause the widow's eyes to fail,
Or eat my morsels all alone,
The orphan sharing not with me;

What could I do, if God should rise,
What answer, should he question me?
From tender youth he brought me up,
As father led me from the womb.

If I the naked perish saw,
And without cover left the poor,
And his loins me no blessing gave,
He was not warmed from my lambs' fleece;

My goodness, my lack of avarice, my freedom from idolatry (31 : 19–28)

If my hand struck an orphan down,
A helpless pleader in the gate,
Let from the shoulder this arm fall,
From out its socket this my arm!

If I my safety sought in gold,
Or made fine gold my confidence,
Rejoiced that I possessed great wealth,
That much my hand had gotten me,

God knows that I am not an evil-doer (31 : 1–4)

I made a compact [illegible] bright,
Never to look up [illegible] moon march,
What else would [illegible] in secret I
And from on [illegible]g hand to them,

For wicked [illegible]ondemning me,
For evil-d[illegible]e Most High.
Does he [illegible]s terrors come!
Does h[illegible] I am doomed.

Let Him judge my freedom from deceit (30 : 5, 6)

If I [illegible]d by foeman's fall,
An[illegible]ry gave me,
I [illegible]sin I opened not
[illegible]m, or to wish him dead.

My uprightness, my unstained honor (31 : 7–12)

[illegible]n of my tent never said:
[illegible]at we could have flesh to eat!"
stranger never stayed outside,
[illegible]ecause my door was closed to him.

If against me my land cried out,
Its furrows wept on my account,
Let thorns grow where the wheat should be,
Instead of barley weeds sprout forth!

I have not hid my guilt from men,
For fear of the great multitude,
Nor frightened by the clans' contempt,
Silent remained within my tent.

O that I had one who would hear!
See my last word! Let God reply!
O that I had the book-roll here,
With the charge written by my foe!

I appeal to the facts, and place them confidently before Him, as one innocent (31 : 35–37)

I would lift it upon my head,
And bind it to me like a crown.
I would account for all my steps,
And would receive him like a prince.

### 2. *Summary of the Argument*

1. Beginning the third cycle of the dialogues, Eliphaz points out that God in no way can be said to derive profit from man's goodness or justice, but is not likely, either, to punish and rebuke piety. The only possible explanation, after all, is that Job's corruption is exceedingly great, and his transgression without bounds. He no doubt had been perfectly unscrupulous and merciless, thinking all the while that God did not notice it, or know it at all. A kind of deistic conception is suggested which perhaps was to some extent met with at the time when the dialogues were written. The reference to the deluge is unmistakable, but no story known at the present time connects this castastrophe with fire as well as water. "Their remnant has the fire consumed" may allude to a myth of Persian origin. Eliphaz, though now convinced of Job's guilt, bids him

make peace with God, and prosperity may come once more, for "those of downcast eyes he helps."

2. Job's reply is a plea for the opportunity of presenting his cause to God himself, and a dignified assertion of his integrity. He knows himself to be a righteous man, and would feel the utmost confidence, were it not that God does what pleases him, and he cannot feel sure that only the right thing pleases him.

3. Bildad emphasizes the power and terror of God as shown in his reign in heaven and hell. He makes peace among the rebels in heaven. The heavenly bodies are not pure in his sight. The great giants of ancient times are in pain where they dwell under the waters. Hell lies naked before him, and Abaddon has no cover. The author conceived of Chaos as being in the north, and of the earth as hanging on nothing. This seems to be due to Hellenistic influence. Rahab was the female chaos monster. The Flying Serpent coiled in the primeval ocean.

4. In replying Job pays no attention to these mythological achievements. He insists with terrible earnestness that God has wronged him, that he tells the truth, and that he will not as long as he lives acknowledge that they are right. His speech occupies only the first five verses of chapter 27.

5. The indication of the speaker has fallen out in the case of Zophar's last address, probably at an early time, as in neither the Hebrew text nor the versions the name has been preserved. It is perfectly evident, however, that from

verse 7 on Job cannot be the speaker, and the general structure of the poem shows that it is Zophar's name that by the omission of some early copyist has been left out. There is no new or important thought in Zophar's last speech. Like the other friends, he ends rather weakly.

6. On the other hand, Job concludes this third cycle with a long and splendid *apologia pro vita sua*. It first describes his former prosperity and the solid basis of justice and mercy on which it seemed to rest. Then comes a pathetic description of the leper's sad plight. The longer part, however, is occupied with a denial in detail of charges that might be made against him. This is one of the most important documents from Hebrew antiquity, from an ethical point of view, because it sets forth a moral ideal in some respects higher than any other presented in the Hebrew Bible, as has been shown in the introduction to this book. The dialogues end with the proud challenge of Job to the Most High to produce the scroll on which the charge against him had been written by his foe. This charge he would place upon his head like a crown, and receive the Almighty like a prince, in the consciousness that he would be able to account for all his steps.

### 3. *The Value of the Discussion*

The third cycle of dialogues represents the friends as charging Job individually and directly with sinfulness. Even Eliphaz declares that he must have been unscrupulous in his treatment of his fellow-men. Bildad assumes the guilt and simply urges that all men are sinners in God's pure sight. Zophar, in describing the wicked man's fate (27 : 13–23), parallels the condition of Job. But none of them adds anything to the arguments already presented.

Job, on the other hand, reasserts his real righteousness and truthfulness. His only reason for anxiety is that he is not sure that God's pleasure is determined by that which is intrinsically right (23 : 13). But however that may be, he concludes by reviewing his days of prosperity and honor, by describing his present agony and humiliation, and by declaring that of intentional wickedness he was absolutely innocent.

### 4. *The Result of the Three Cycles of Dialogue*

The outcome of these eighteen discourses is largely negative—Job has received no answer to his appeals. He has shown the inadequacy of the arguments brought forward by the friends, but has come to no final conclusion concerning the reason for his sufferings. Yet he has remained true to his ideals: he has refused to twist the facts

of life, and he has had momentary glimpses of a higher God-conception which has to some extent strengthened his confidence in a moral order in the universe, though different from that imagined by the friends.

## VII

### ELIHU'S ADDRESSES
(*Chaps.* 32–37)

The speeches of Elihu form a very distinctly marked section by themselves. The reasons for referring them to a later and inferior writer than the author of the dialogues are stated on pp. 89f. of the introduction to Job. They are, anyhow, the utterances of a pompous, self-conceited, and rather tedious young fellow, who virtually repeats the arguments already advanced.

### 1. *The Paraphrase*

#### (1) *Suffering Sometimes a Means of Self-Knowledge* (*chaps.* 32 : 6–33 : 33)

Because of my youth I have held back and not dared to express my opinion. I thought it proper that those who were older should set forth their wisdom. But understanding depends upon the spirit that is within a man, and it is the breath of the Almighty that gives insight. Length of life does not always impart wisdom, and old men do not

As a young man, I have hesitated to correct your discussion (32 : 6–10)

always see what is right. Therefore I now say: Listen to
You have not convinced Job as yet (32 : 11–14)
me, and I will voice my opinion. I have been listening to your arguments, but there was none of you who convinced Job or could properly answer his words. Nor would it do for you to maintain that in this case you have come upon such wisdom as only God can deal with, and no mere man. He has not addressed himself to me yet, and I shall not
I am full of words, yet I am no partisan or flatterer (32 : 15–22)
answer him in the manner you do. For I am full of words, and the spirit within me forces me to utter them. My body is like a new wine-skin ready to burst with the wine. I must speak, open my lips, talk, or I shall have no relief. I shall not show any partisanship or flatter anybody. That is an art that I do not know and also a dangerous one, for if a man is not impartial and truthful, he is likely to be carried away suddenly by God's judgment.

Listen to me, O Job, and make answer, if you can (33 : 1–7)
Now, therefore, Job, listen to my words. I need only to open my mouth and let my tongue speak, and at once my mind sends forth a stream of wise words. If thou art able to give any answer, thou mayest rise and do so. Thou needst not be afraid. For compared with God I am like thyself, taken from the clay just as thou art; the terror of me will not unman thee nor will my hand press heavily on
Your assertions about yourself and your charges against God can be answered (33 : 8–12)
thee. Thou didst say in my hearing: "I am clean and have committed no transgression, but he seeks for pretexts to attack me as an enemy; he gives no answer when I cry, and hides himself from me." In this thou art wrong; for God is greater than man. It is not wise to contend against him

and declare that he does not give answer. For he speaks in one way and does not contradict it when he speaks in another. Sometimes it is through a dream, a vision in the night, when he opens the ear to hear terror-inspiring oracles, and the eyes to see images of fearful import, in order to lead a man away from wrong-doing or to drive out pride, and thus to save him from premature death. At other times he chastens a man with pain on his bed; he loses his appetite, can eat nothing, becomes so lean that his bones stick out, and he approaches the grave and the angels of death claim his life. Then his guardian angel, the mediator, one of the thousand that have charge of human souls, shows him what belongs to his righteousness, takes mercy on him and proclaims: "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have received a ransom; let his flesh be fresher than a child's, let him return to the days of his youth!" He now can approach God again freely and is received with favor; he sees his face with joy, tells men of his faithfulness, and recounts in a hymn his story: "I had sinned and done what was wrong, but he did not punish me according to my guilt; he saved my life from hell, and my soul rejoices in the light."

God speaks to men in various ways to influence them, sometimes in dreams (33 : 13–18)

Again in times of illness (33 : 19–22)

When one's guardian angel shows him his real condition of heart and delivers him (33 : 23–25)

So that he repents and rejoices again in life (33 : 26–28)

(2) *The Justness of God* (*chap.* 34)

Job testifies against himself when he declares his innocence and God's wrong-doing (34 : 1–9)

Hear my words, ye sages, for the ear tries words, as the palate tastes meat. Let us decide among us what is right and true. Job has said: "I am righteous and God has wronged me; in spite of the fact that I am just and have committed no transgression I am smitten with incurable wounds." Was there ever a man like Job? He drinks up blasphemies like water. He keeps company with bad men; for he says that it does not profit a man to be in friendly relations with God. But the Almighty does nothing that is wrong,

God is righteous and with absolute power (34 : 10–15)

and he renders to each man according to his conduct. No one gave him charge over the earth or intrusted the world to his keeping. He is the absolute ruler. If he takes away his spirit and draws the breath away from the

He deals with men as He will (34 : 16–20)

body, man returns to the dust. Is it possible to imagine that the world can be governed by one who hates righteousness? Will he really condemn him that is just and mighty? He says to a king: "Thou wretch!" and to nobles: "Ye wicked ones!" He does not respect the persons of princes, and regards not the rich more than the poor. For they are all the work of his hands. They die

Understanding them, He acts swiftly and summarily, so that wickedness may not become supreme (34 : 21–30)

in a moment; they are cast off from their people; the mighty are taken away without a stroke of the hand. His eyes are on all the ways a man walks, and he sees all their steps. There is no darkness so deep that evil-doers can hide in it. For he sets no time when men know that they must appear before his judgment seat. He breaks in

pieces the mighty without an investigation, and puts others in their places. Knowing their works, he overturns them in the night, and they are crushed: he strikes them in the sight of all, listening to the complaint of the lowly and the cry of the patient sufferers. If he is quiet, who can find fault? If he hides his face, who can see him? But he watches over nations and individuals that the godless may not reign. Thou mayest decide for thyself whether he should recompense as it pleases thee or according to his own will. Men of intelligence must admit that Job has not spoken with true insight. May he be warned in regard to his speeches which are like those of the wicked. For he only increases his sins by multiplying his words against God.

Can such an one be judged fairly? Job lacks insight (34 : 31–37)

(3) *The Apparent Unprofitableness of Piety* (*chap.* 35)

Thou seemest to regard this as correct behavior and callest it "my right against God." Thou intimatest that thou hast had no profit from piety, and that thou mightest as well have lived in sin. I will answer thee and all who hold the same opinion. Look up to heaven and behold the firmament. If thou hast sinned, how does that affect him? If thou art righteous, it adds nothing to what he has. It is only men whom thou canst hurt by thy wickedness or help by thy righteous conduct. Truly, Job opens his mouth in vanity and makes long speeches without any understanding.

Job says that righteousness seems no more profitable than wickedness (35 : 1–4)

Can it possibly be of any moment to God which one pursues (35 : 5–8)

Job does not humble himself before God nor wait his pleasure (35 : 9–16)

He does not ask, Where is God, my creator, who gives songs in the night, who makes us wiser than the animals on the earth and the birds of heaven? God does not listen to idle talk. How canst thou say that thou dost not see him? Be silent and wait for him.

### (4) *The Necessity of Submission to the Merciful, Just, and Inscrutable Will of God* (*chaps.* 36–37)

Let me demonstrate the fulness of my knowledge (36 : 1–4)

I would still instruct you a little further and speak on behalf of God. I will bring my knowledge from afar and justify my creator. My words are not false, for here stands before you one who is perfect in knowledge. God

God never overlooks guilt, but he uses pain and misery as enlighteners of men (36 : 5–10)

does not leave the guilty alive, he accords to the afflicted their right. He always delivers the humble. But when he lets kings sit upon their thrones until they become arrogant, and they are bound in chains and held in the cords of misery, he shows them their transgressions caused by pride, opens their ears and bids them repent; if they do so

Those who refuse to look or listen come to grief (36 : 11–16)

they spend their days in happiness, if not, they go to hell and die in their folly, not even crying for mercy when he binds them. They die in youth, or lose their manhood's strength among Sodomites. But he saves the patient through his patience, and opens his ear through affliction.

Job's prosperity was too much for his judgment (36 : 17–23)

It was thy fortune that deceived thee. Thou wert so prosperous that thou beganst to judge things in the way the wicked do, and their judgment was meted out to thee.

Now let not thy punishment lead thee to scorn because of the high price that thou must pay to be ransomed. Let not a foolish pride lead thee astray; take heed lest thou preferrest iniquity to affliction patiently borne.

God's power is great; He exhibits it in manifold ways which are incomprehensible (36 : 24–37 : 13)

God is exalted in power. He is the incomparable teacher. No one prescribes how he should act, no one could say: "Thou hast acted wrongly." The wonders of his creation fill the hearts of all men with joy. He draws drops of water up out of the sea, and brings rain out of the clouds. He distributes food to the nations. The thunder-bolt is his weapon, the thunder his war-cry. Incomprehensibly great are the things he does. He sends the snow as well as the rain, the hot wind from the chambers of the south, and the cold from the northern stars. He breathes and the water lies captured in the form of ice, and uses hail as well as lightning to accomplish his terrible or gracious purposes. How much, O Job, dost thou understand of all this? It is foolish, indeed, of a human being to criticise the divine wisdom, as though he had been present at the time of creation when the firmament was spread out like a mirror. The majesty of God may be seen, but he himself is past finding out. Powerful he is and altogether just. How could he ever pervert justice? Therefore men should fear him. He has no regard for those who are wise in their own conceits.

Can you understand God, O Job, or get on even terms with him? Could he pervert justice? (37 : 14–24)

## VIII

### THE COLLOQUY OF YAHWE WITH JOB
(*Chaps.* 38–41)

The original Job story, according to chap. 42 : 7, contained some words of Yahwe to Job, apparently, however, an approval of the position he had taken and a condemnation of that of the friends. The long address which is found in chapters 38–41 expresses no approval but rather a direct or implied criticism of Job. As has already been noted on pp. 90-94 of the Introduction to Job, these chapters have great literary merit and might have been composed by the author of the dialogues. But they do not suggest an answer to Job's problem. They merely set forth impressively what he has already conceded concerning the power and greatness of God. Whether this in any sense meets the needs Job may be seriously questioned.

#### 1. *The Translation.*

#### (1) *The Speech of Yahwe* (*chaps.* 38–40: 2, 8–14)

I challenge thee, O Job, to answer my questions (38 : 1–3)

Who darkens here the great world-plan,
With empty words, of knowledge void?
Gird thou a soldier like, thy loins,
And I will ask, inform me thou!

Did you direct the work of creation? (38 : 4–7)

Where wert thou when I made the earth?
Declare what thou didst notice then!
Who fixed the measure it should have?
Who stretched the line across its face?

Its pillars, on what were they set,
Its corner-stone, who laid it down,
While all the morning stars did sing,
And all the sons of God rejoiced?

Who shut the sea with heavy doors,
When from the womb it once broke forth,
When I made clouds its baby-clothes,
Its swaddling-bands folds of the dark?

Or set bounds to the sea? (38 : 8–11)

When for it I the limits set,
Established for it bars and doors,
And cried out: "Thus far shalt thou go,
But here thy angry waves must stop."

Hast thou the morning ever called,
And taught the day-spring where to rise,
That on the earth's skirt it might seize,
Change it as clay by seal is changed?

Or assist in making the world habitable? (38 : 12–18)

Hast thou the sources visited,
Walked on the bottom of the sea?
Hast thou descried the gates of death?
Hast thou the gates of darkness seen?

Hast thou surveyed the earth's extent?
Art thou acquainted with its size?
Then thou wert born, so thou must know,
For very many are thy days.

Can you point out the realms of light and darkness, the reservoirs of hail and mist, of rain and ice? (38 : 19–30)

What way leads to the realm of light,
And darkness, where is it at home?
Canst thou trace it to its own place,
And to its house know'st thou the path?

To the snow's chambers hast thou been,
Gone to the treasuries of hail,
Which are reserved for evil times,
For days of struggle and of strife?

Where is the mist divided up?
Whence o'er the earth is water spread?
Who cleaves a channel for the rain,
And for the lightning's sheen a way,

To make it rain where no man lives,
No son of man has ever dwelt;
To water waste and wilderness,
In thirsty land to make grass grow?

Out of whose womb does the ice come,
And the hoar-frost who brings it forth,
When into stone the water turns,
The surface of the deep is hard?

Can you control the constellations and their influence? (38 : 31–33)

Canst thou connect the Pleiades,
Orion's fetters canst thou loose,
Send forth Hyades in their time,
And comfort Ursa for her sons?

The laws of heaven dost thou fix,
Define their powers on the earth?
Dost thou lift to the cloud thy voice,
And does the water-stream obey?

Can you bring rain or direct the lightning? (38 : 34–38)

Canst thou send lightnings, and they go?
Do they to thee say: "Here we are"?
Who places wisdom in the clouds,
Gives insight to the meteors?

Who wisely spreads the clouds above,
And pours the jars of heaven out,
When dust is molten to a mass,
And fast together cleave the clods?

Wilt thou prey for the lion hunt,
And still the hunger of the whelps,
When they lie crouching in their lair,
For ambush in their thicket lurk,

Can you supply the lion's whelps with food? (38 : 39–41)

Who gets his booty before night,
When unto God his young cry out,
When the young lions roar for food,
And wander hungry here and there?

Dost thou know when the steinbock bears,
Direct the travail of the hinds,
Number the months they must fulfill,
And fix the time for them to calve?

Or direct the travail of the hinds of the wild goat? (39 : 1–4)

They bow themselves, are opened wide,
And slip their painful burdens through.
The young are weaned, grow in the field,
Go forth and nevermore return.

Could you direct the wild ass or make the wild ox work? (39 : 5–12)

Who e'er sent forth the wild ass free?
Who loosed the bands of the onager?
His house I made the wilderness,
And the salt wastes his lodging-place.

He laughs at all the city's noise,
The driver's clamor he hears not,
His pasture in the mountains seeks,
Searching for every green thing.

Will the wild ox thy servant be?
Will at thy crib he pass the night?
Wilt thou with furrow-cord bind him,
Or will he harrow after thee?

Canst thou trust him, though he is strong?
Wilt thou commit to him thy work?
Canst thou be sure he will return
And gather in thy threshing-floor?

Did you give the noble war-horse his strength? (39 : 13–25)

Bestow'st thou on the horse his strength?
Cloth'st thou his neck with quivering mane?
Dost make him as a locust spring,
While his fine snorting terror spreads?

He paws rejoicing in the vale,
Goes to the battle in full strength;
He laughs at fear, is not dismayed,
Before the sword he turns not back.

The quiver rattles over him,
The cutting spear and javelin;
He licks the earth in rage and wrath,
And turns not either right or left.

Hears he a call, he rushes on,
Is trumpet sounded, he says: "Ah!"
He from afar the battle scents
By captains' cries and shouts of war.

Does through thy wisdom the hawk soar,
And spread his wings toward the south?
Does at thy word the eagle mount,
And build himself a nest on high?

Did you teach the hawk and the eagle their ways? (39 : 26–30)

From thence he can spy out his prey,
His eyes descry it from afar,
And his young ones suck up the blood,
And where the slain are, there is he.

Will the reprover still contend?
God's censor, let him answer now!
Wilt thou my righteousness deny,
Declare me guilty to go free?

Are you still, O Job, in a contentious, critical mood? (40 : 1–8)

Can you use God's weapons to punish the wicked and humiliate the proud? (40 : 9–12)

Hast thou an arm like that of God,
And canst thou thunder as he does?
Adorn thyself with pomp and state,
Put majesty and splendor on.

Pour forth the fulness of thy wrath,
And bring thou low all that is high.
If pride thou seest, abase it thou.
Tread down the tyrants where they stand.

Then I will acknowledge your strength (40 : 13, 14)

Put them together in the dust.
Conceal them in a hidden place.
And then will I confess to thee,
That thy right hand delivers thee.

## 2. *Behemoth and Leviathan: An Interpolation*

(*Chap.* 40 : 15–41 : 34)

### *Behemoth* (*Chap.* 40 : 15–24)

Behold Behemoth, mighty in strength, unafraid, unmatched! (40 : 15–24)

Behold, beside thee Behemoth!
He lives on grass as does the ox.
Behold, what power is in his loins,
What strength his belly's muscles have!

His tail is as a cedar stiff;
Like ropes the sinews of his thigh,
Like tubes of brass are all his bones,
And like an iron bar his ribs.

The firstling of the ways of God,
To rule his fellows he was made.
The mountains furnish him with food,
He laughs at every wild beast.

Under the lotus-tree he lies,
In covert safe of reed and fen.
A shady hut the huge trees make,
The river willows stand around.

He flees not, though Euphrates rise,
Though Jordan break forth, he is calm.
Who, then, will take him by his teeth,
Catch him with cords, and pierce his nose?

*Leviathan* (*Chap.* 41 : 1–34)

Leviathan, too, cannot be tamed or worsted (41 : 1–8)

Canst thou draw up Leviathan
With hook, or hold with cord his tongue,
Or put a rope into his nose,
Or with a spike bore through his jaw?

Will he for mercy plead to thee,
And speak to thee with soothing words?
Will he with thee a contract make
To be thy slave forevermore?

Canst play with him as with a bird,
Bound as a dove for a child's sport?
Will fisher folk traffic in him,
And among merchants him retail?

Will they in ships transport his skin,
In fishing vessels bring his head?
Lay but thy hand upon him once,
And of a battle think no more.

Behold, thy confidence is vain,
At sight of him thou art cast down.
None is so bold as him to stir.
Before him who can hold his own?

Who can resist and come off safe?
Under the heavens there is none.
His members none can batter down:
Such are his strength and glorious build.

**His coat of scales are a perfect defence (41 : 9–19)**

Who can his covering remove,
Force through his double coat of mail?
Who can break in through his front gate,
Where awful teeth are keeping watch?

His back consists of rows of shields,
His breast resembles seals of stone;
One to the other lies so near
That between them no air can come.

His neesings cause a light to shine;
His eyes are like the radiant dawn;
Within his mouth bright torches burn,
And from it issue sparks of fire.

Out of his nose a smoke ascends
As from a kindled boiling pot;
His breath glows as a burning coal,
And from his mouth a flame comes forth.

By his appearance and firmness he inspires every one with terror
41 : 20–30)

Might lodges proudly on his neck,
And Terror leaps before his feet.
The flakes of flesh are firmly joined,
Fixed to him with a millstone's weight.

When he arises, gods are scared,
And heaven's watchers lose their wits.
When he arises, sword helps not,
Nor spear, nor dart, nor pointed shaft.

He looks on iron as on straw,
And brass to him is rotten wood;
The arrow cannot make him flee,
The sling-stone is to him like dust.

The club he looks upon as chaff,
And laughs when spears are thrown at him.
If under him are sharpened shards,
He spreads these vessels out like mire.

He makes the deep boil as a pot,
The ocean as a caldron seethe.
The river's bottom is his path,
The sea he reckons as his range.

Among the denizens of the deep, he is supreme (41 : 31–34)

None is his equal in the earth,
Made to be played with by the gods;
All those on high have fear of him,
The king of all the ocean holds.

Behemoth is mentioned in Isa. 30 : 6 and possibly in Hab. 2 : 15 and Ps. 73 : 22. Leviathan is referred to in Job 3 : 8, Isa. 27 : 1, Ps. 74 : 14, and Ps. 104 : 26. Both are described more fully in Eth. Enoch 60 : 7–9, Syr. Baruch 29 : 4 and 4 Ezra 6 : 49–52. In these later works Behemoth is a male monster living in the mountains and the desert, while Leviathan is a female monster occupying the sea. They are of enormous size and power. Eth. Enoch 60 : 7–9 comes from the Apocalypse of Noah which was translated from the Greek, and not directly from the Aramaic, as the Parables of Enoch. "Dendain" is probably a corruption of "Naid," the Greek rendering of "Nod" in Gen. 4 : 16. The Land of Nod is the Kenite Negeb. Isa. 30 : 6 shows that Behemoth was connected with the Negeb in an earlier tradition. In every one of the passages quoted above Leviathan is unmistakably a mythical monster of the sea.

It has been suggested that in these interpolations we

have descriptions of actually existing animals. For Behemoth the rhinoceros (Sa'adia), the elephant (Schultens), and the hippopotamus (Bochart) have been proposed, and for Leviathan the crocodile. But it is quite evident that many features do not apply to any of these animals. The hippopotamus, which is most favored by the interpreters, has not a tail stiff as a cedar, does not get his food in the mountains, and can scarcely have been thought of as the first of God's creations. The crocodile does not send forth from his mouth a stream of fire, and no smoke ascends from his nostrils. The great abyss, the *tehom*, is not his dwelling-place; he does not cause the ocean to seethe as a caldron; and the denizens of heaven cannot be imagined to be afraid of him. It does not seem possible to explain, in a natural way, these extraordinary conceptions as "idealizations."

The author may, indeed, have borrowed certain features for his sketch from the great beasts infesting the valley of the Nile. Even a wholly mythical monster could not well be described without resort to reality, as the pictorial representations of such beings by the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians show. Hence Behemoth, the "colossal beast" of primeval times, occasionally reminds of a hippopotamus, and Leviathan, the "coiled" serpent of the abyss, the earth-encircling ocean, now and then recalls the crocodile. But there are numerous indications that to the poet's mind they were something else and more. He desired to emphasize

man's weakness as compared with the power of the Almighty. How utterly beyond man's strength and skill it was to capture, render harmless, bring into subjection these terrible creatures! There were stories current in Israel, as among other nations, of how they were subdued by the great god who created the world. Phrases used in poetry now lost may have come back to the author's memory. When the Greek translator found in his text the term "gods," he substituted for it "angels." It is possible to be essentially a monotheist and yet believe in the existence of "gods many and lords many," and such expressions as "gods," "sons of the gods," "watchers," "angels," and "holy ones" are often nearly synonymous. A later time found even the "angels" out of place and succeeded in making the text here and there wholly unintelligible.

The old mythological figures lived on and furnished material not only to the apocalyptic writers, but also to the rabbis of a later period who speculated on the use to which these monsters would be put in providing food for the saints at the great Messianic banquet.

The reason why these interpolations were made is obvious. In the Speech of Yahwe some animals had been mentioned, but they had been quite of the ordinary sort familiar to men. These awful creatures, Behemoth and Leviathan, seemed far more calculated to impress the lesson of God's power and man's utter insignificance.

(3) *Job's Reply* (*Chaps.* 40 : 3, 4; 42 : 2–6)

I am too small, what can I say?
I lay my hand upon my mouth.
Once spoke I, will not speak again;
Twice, but will add no word thereto.

I have no answer to make (40 : 3, 4)

I know thou canst do everything,
And nothing is too hard for thee.
I taught, but did not understand,
What was too wonderful to know.

I have attempted the impossible (42 : 1–3)

What I had heard I knew of thee,
Now I have seen thee with my eyes:
Hence I repent me and recant,
In dust and ashes sitting here.

I repent of my words (42 : 4–6)

### 2. *The Summary*

Yahwe addresses himself to Job, charging him with darkening the plan of the universe by words that reveal no knowledge and challenging him to answer his questions. These questions concern the creation and economy of nature. Can Job tell who made the earth, and how it was made, in the primeval time when none were present but the stars, these living beings who are the sons of God. The conception is different from that of Gen. 1, where the stars are made later than the earth. Was Job present at the famous struggle with the ocean monsters which

ended with the fixing of the boundaries of the sea? With cruel irony this mortal is addressed as one born at the time of the creation of the world and therefore able to bear testimony in regard to it. He must know where the realms of light and darkness are, the reservoirs of hail and mist, and rain and ice. Is he able to bind the Pleiades or loose the fetters of the giant Orion? The reference is to some myth according to which the Pleiades for a good reason were kept apart and Orion held in chains. In the rainy season Hyades appear, and the Bear has lost her cubs but been comforted. Did this comfort come from Job? The heavens exercise their powers over events on earth. Are these powers regulated by him? Can he bring rain or lightning? God can supply the lion's whelps with food. Can Job do this? Does he direct the travail of the hinds so that their offspring matures and is born in time? Has he any power over the wild ass, and can he make the wild ox his trusted servant? The horse is a splendid animal, especially when he goes forth to battle. Was it Job who gave him his strength? The hawk and the eagle know how to build their nests and to spy out their prey. Did Job teach them how to do this? If Job is a frail mortal, born but yesterday, ignorant of the manner in which the world came into existence, and powerless to influence its course, why does he presume to censure God who has created all things and in his wisdom directs and provides for his world? Perhaps Job can use the thunderbolt to punish

the wicked and humiliate the proud. If he can, then it is evident that he is able to deliver himself. Then he will be admitted as victor in this contest between him and his maker.

The author of this Speech of Yahwe could probably conceive of no other answer than that which follows in 40 : 3, 4; 42 : 2–6, whether he wrote it himself, or some later writer supplied it, as is perhaps most probable. He made Job confess that the speech was decisive. It had convinced him that he had attempted to instruct, without understanding what was too wonderful to know. What he had hitherto known concerning God was only the things that man had spoken and his ears had heard. Now God himself had appeared before his eyes; and he repented that he had spoken as he had concerning him.

### 3. *The Value of this Contribution to the Solution*

When the utter inadequacy of this divine speech in meeting the questions, difficulties, and problems that had occupied the mind of Job in the dialogues is considered, it becomes wellnigh inconceivable that this tame conclusion should have come from the master-mind to whom we are indebted for these dialogues. And yet they afford no other conclusion. The dialogues leave Job a victor over his friends, but still troubled by uncertainty regarding his own justification and deliverance. He has asserted his

innocence and appealed straight to God. The speech of Yahwe does not help him out; it merely sets forth the power and resourcefulness of God in order that Job may see clearly that he belongs to a different class of beings and is not in any respect on a plane with God. The inference is that Job should humble himself, acknowledge his inferiority, and take submissively what God is pleased to give him, whether prosperity and happiness, or pain and woe. This, no doubt, represents the judgment of the average Hebrew mind at the time, but it is *not* a conclusion appropriate to the discussion of chapters 4–31.

## IX

### THE SOLUTION OF JOB'S PROBLEM

### *Concluding Remarks*

As a matter of fact, the Book of Job leads to no clear-cut conclusion. It contains a number of widely differing attempts to find a solution of the problem of human suffering, none of which may be altogether false, yet none of which have the stamp of finality.

The prose story frankly suggested that Job's sufferings were sent upon him by Yahwe as a test of his righteousness. His demeanor triumphantly proved that it was disinterested and genuine. The story also implied that such

righteousness would surely be rewarded with abounding prosperity. But this simple manner of dealing with the problem was far from satisfying the poet to whom we owe most of the book.

In the dialogues, the friends declare repeatedly that sufferings like those of Job are an indication of sinfulness. While he refutes this assumption, he fails to present any real explanation of his extraordinary experience. His criticism is deep and searching; but it is negative and not constructive. He has flashes of insight, but no theory, no great idea leading to a clear and consistent interpretation. But he illustrates unconsciously the supreme value of the character which issues from such a test, refined as by fire, strong in manly independence, scornful of pretence and falsehood, sincere and confident, valuing truth and righteousness above every earthly prize.

The speeches of Elihu incidentally suggest that suffering sometimes gives God his opportunity to speak with men and guide their lives aright; but its educative value is not emphasized in any way, and it cannot be said that he treats the subject from any point of view essentially different from that of the friends.

The speech of Yahwe urges that there can be no give and take, no common ground between him and men. They must receive his providence submissively, and not assume to criticise his doings. To argue as Job does is to approach rebellion. This virtually is a denial of all free in-

quiry on the specious ground that, as man cannot know everything, it is presumptuous in him to try to know anything that vitally concerns him.

No part of the book has contributed more effectively to the solution of Job's problem than the dialogues. For in them the right to incisive questioning, comprehensive research, and unbiased judgment, without which there can be no true advance in knowledge, is most strenuously affirmed and gloriously exercised.

# CANTICLES

# CANTICLES

## I

### INTRODUCTION TO CANTICLES

#### 1. *The Title*

The name Canticles is derived from the Latin *canticula*, plural of *canticulum*, a little song. It is first mentioned as a title in 1526. The anonymous author of the "Pilgrimage of Perfection" says: "Rede the canticles of Solomon." This shows a conception of the book as a collection of songs. The Dutch Staaten-Bibel has as an alternate title Cantica. The Vulgate *canticum canticorum*, like the Greek *asma asmaton*, is a translation of the Hebrew *shir ha-shirim*. This title may mean the "song of songs" in the sense of "the best song," "the most excellent song," as "slave of slaves" (Gen. 9 : 25) means "the lowest of slaves"; or "songs of songs" "the choicest of songs," "the best collection of songs," as *shir ha-ma'aloth* means "Songs of the Ascent (to Jerusalem)" in Pss. 120–132. The latter was probably the original meaning; the conception of the work as a unit naturally led to taking it in the former sense.

### 2. *Canonicity*

When questions first arose as to whether this book was of such a character that the hands should be washed after contact with it is not known. The idea that holy books possessed a sanctity rendering it improper to touch profane things without a ceremonial washing after they had been handled seems to have originated with the Pharisees, and can scarcely be older than the first century B. C. But it was in the first and second centuries of our era that the canon was reduced to its present number of books by the unwillingness to ascribe so high a degree of sanctity to certain works, for one reason or another. Not until the time of Rabbi Akiba, the contemporary of Simon bar Kozeba, the famous Messiah who reigned over Israel 132–135 A. D., was the question decided. What determined the issue was the allegorical interpretation, though undoubtedly the ascription of the book to Solomon, which seemed to place it among the earlier literary productions of the nation, exercised a certain influence. (Mishna, Jadaim, 3 : 5, cp. Eduyoth, 5 : 3.)

Whenever this allegorical interpretation has been questioned and a literal sense accepted, there has naturally been a hesitancy in recognizing the canonicity of the book. This probably was true of Theodore of Mopsuestia and those who sympathized with him. Chateillon certainly was led by his recognition of its secular character to deny its right

to a place in the canon. Episcopius, who died in 1643, was doubtful, and Whiston, in 1723, rejected its canonicity. Semler, in 1757, could not regard it as a divine book; and J. D. Michaelis was led by some expressions that seemed to him obscene to leave it out of his translation of the Old Testament (1770–1781). In the beginning of the nineteenth century many minds were troubled by the presence in the Bible of a book whose secular character was then coming to be widely recognized. A young pastor who voiced his difficulties to Niebuhr, received from him an answer that has proved satisfactory to a growing number of men. According to a story told by Bunsen to Renan (*Cantique des Cantiques*, p. 147), the great historian said: "As for me, I should feel that something were missing in the Bible, if there were not in it some expression of the profoundest and strongest of human sentiments." More recently, the question of canonicity has become one of purely historic interest. Far from being willing to lose anything preserved to us in the Hebrew scriptures, we rejoice in the possession of every piece of writing, whatever its character, that reveals to us the life of ancient Israel.

### 3. *Allegorical Interpretation*

Neither Philo nor those writers in the New Testament who used the allegorical method of interpretation then in vogue applied it to the elucidation of this book, if they

were at all familiar with it. The earliest evidence of such an interpretation is suggested by the passage from the Mishna quoted above, in which Rabbi Akiba maintained that of all the books in the Bible this was the most holy, and that all the world was not worth the day when this book was given to Israel. There is a tradition recorded in Tosephta Sanhedrin 12, and the Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 101a, according to which Rabbi Akiba declared: "Whoever sings from the Song of Songs in the wine-houses and makes it a (profane) song shall have no share in the world to come." This would seem to indicate that he clearly put upon it another than the literal sense. He no doubt saw in the book a description of the love of God and Israel; and this continued to be the common interpretation in the synagogue, as Targum and Midrash show. Origen is the first exegete who applies the method in detail. In a work of ten books, of which about a third has come down to us in a Latin translation, he rejects the literal sense as inadmissible, in spite of the suggestion that the literary form is that of an epithalamion, and explains that according to the moral or tropological sense it represents the love of the soul for the heavenly bridegroom, according to the mystic sense the union of Christ and the Church. The mysticism of the mediæval church occupied itself much with this book, especially after it had discovered in it the Virgin Mary. Bernard of Clairvaux wrote eighty-six sermons on it. Perhaps the finest type of mystical in-

terpretation is found in Teresa de Çepeda's commentary on the first chapter. Even those of the reformers who in general had abandoned the allegorical interpretation of Scripture and were least touched by mysticism could not, without rejecting the book altogether, break with tradition on this point. This in part explains Calvin's opposition to Chateillon and Luther's attempt to find in it a political allegory, in which Solomon's reign was held up as a model. Luther has been followed in more recent times by others, who have seen in it a presentation of the kingdom of the ten tribes and Hezekiah, Samaria and King Tirhaka, or Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

Unquestionably the prophets often represented the relations of Israel and Yahwe under the figure of a marriage, but the context always clearly indicates what the meaning is. In Canticles, on the other hand, there is not the slightest indication of any hidden sense, no reference to God or to things generally regarded as religious, and no hint that the language, so inappropriate in itself for the expression of a different order of ideas, is to be understood figuratively.

### 4. *Recognition of a Literal Sense*

The youth who, in the second century A. D., sang these canticles in wine-houses, certainly took the language in its literal sense, and probably anticipated the most modern of critics in discovering piquant suggestions. Incidentally,

the stern rebuke of Akiba makes it clear that the Hebrew was still used in ordinary life. No man would ever have thought of singing anything like our Aramaic Targum in a wine-shop. Theodore of Mopsuestia was condemned one hundred years after his death by a council because he had explained the book as a collection of love-songs; and Theodoret mentions with disapproval others who saw in Canticles only a poem relating to the marriage of Solomon and the Egyptian queen. During the Middle Ages, not only were love-songs composed with motives drawn from Canticles, but also the book itself interpreted as being a song of Solomon in honor of the Virgin, which he afterward dedicated to the foreign queen. Chateillon was not the only one in the Renaissance period to recognize the true character of these songs. This was done also by Luis de Leon, who made an excellent translation into Spanish, and provided it with notes explaining nothing but the literal sense for a sister in a convent. As the basis of the acknowledged spiritual meaning many interpreters saw a literal sense and devoted themselves to its elucidation. Some writers of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries thus reached the conclusion that the book was a drama, an epithalamion, or a collection of eclogues and madrigals, without denying a deeper religious significance. In the course of the last century the allegorical interpretation has been generally abandoned and the differences between exegetes have largely confined themselves to the literary form.

### 5. *Attempts at Dramatic Construction*

Caspar Sanctius, in 1616, affirmed that Canticles was a sacred drama, and Cornelius a Lapide, who died 1637, divided it into five acts. But the first elaborate effort at presenting it as such was that of Laurentius Petræus, a Danish pastor, who in 1640 arranged the contents of the work in dramatic form, translated it metrically, and set music to it. Huet, in 1670, declared that it was a dramatic piece in which the passionate sentiments of husband and wife are expressed. Some time before 1706, Hermann von der Hardt, in a manuscript in the Wolfenbüttel library mentioned by Lessing, maintained that it was a drama, set it forth in acts and scenes, and interpreted it as referring to the conditions and hopes of the kingdom of John Hyrcanus. An anonymous Breslau pastor in 1720 arranged it dramatically and introduced, besides Solomon and Shulamith, also the queen of Sheba, Nicaule by name; and two years later G. W(achter) likewise presented it as a drama, while Nicholas Nonnen, in 1725, gave as his opinion that it is not an eclogue, nor an oaristys, or fond discourse of lovers, nor an epithalamion, but a pure drama. J. F. Jacobi, in 1771, seems to have been the first to regard Canticles as a secular drama. That Solomon's love was scorned by the country maiden who remained true to a humbler lover, was the thesis of Ammon in 1790, defended also by Löwisohn in 1816. This idea had been anticipated by an

anonymous Jewish writer in the twelfth century, quoted by Ginsburg, but the dramatic form was not then suggested. Through the powerful influence of Ewald this shepherd hypothesis became widely accepted after the publication of his first work on the subject in 1826. Renan, in 1860, gave to it his authority. Stickel, in 1888, found it necessary to introduce two pairs of lovers; and Bruston, Koenig, Martineau, Rothstein, Adeney, and, as late as 1902, Duhm have worked out various dramatic schemes.

There are insuperable difficulties with this theory in all of its forms. It seems to be impossible for any of its adherents to agree as to how the supposed drama should be divided, who the speakers are, what the plot is, where the action takes place, or how it is carried out. It is sufficiently hard to believe that the lover is spoken to as a present person when he is absent, and that the Shunemite speaks to Solomon so as to encourage his passion while in reality she is refusing his advances and only thinks of her absent lover. But entire scenes have to be regarded as dreams, and a secondary stage has to be resorted to as incidental to scenes that would not occupy two minutes. There is not the slightest perceptible difference of attitude between Solomon and the shepherd, or between the heroine's responses to one and the other; and no stage directions, even as simple as those indicating the different speakers in the dialogues of Job, are found. The scenes

are too short to be acted; and if written to be understood as a drama, the work is without an analogy in the literature of any people.

### 6. *The Epithalamic Theory*

It was suggested already in antiquity by Origen, Eusebius, and Polychronius that Canticles is an epithalamion. The idea was taken up by Bossuet (1627–1704), who supposed that the songs were intended to be sung on the seven days of the wedding week, and accepted in this form by Lowth (1753) and others. More recently, this view has been greatly strengthened by observations of the customs sporadically found among various Semitic peoples of the present day. In 1860 Renan referred to accounts by Charles Schefer, who had often seen at Damiette and in Syria weddings at which plays were performed. They lasted seven days, and each day the bride had a new dress. These plays were given in the harem; those invited formed the choir. Renan himself suggested that Canticles was a libretto for a wedding, played during several days, and that the young people of the village marched representing the guard of Solomon, while the women impersonated the daughters of Jerusalem. He regarded the work as midway between the regular drama and the eclogue or pastoral dialogue. In 1873 J. G. Wetzstein published an article on the "Syrian Threshing Table," in

*Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, pp. 170 ff. At El Hamma, north of Damascus, he had been present at a peasant wedding as guest of the sheik 'Id of the Soleb tribe. On the morning after the wedding night the young husband and his wife played king and queen, and the leader of the young men vizir. Then the bridal party brought the threshing-table from the barn and made it a throne on which the pair were seated. No crown was used, but the hair fell freely about the shoulders of the bride. Then came the sword-dance and a ring-dance. In the sword dance the bride held the sword in her right, a handkerchief in her left hand. After her virginity had been proved, a great dance began to which a *wasf* was sung. This *wasf* was a description of the beauty and gorgeous apparel of the bride and the groom. Wetzstein suggested that Canticles contains some *wasfs*.

In 1882 St. Haon, in *Revue de deux Mondes*, gave an even more important description of a Jewish wedding attended by him in Tunis. There were dances, bridegroom and bride sat on a dais, songs were sung; but there was no dance by the bride.

While the observations of Schefer, Renan, and St. Haon apparently made no impression, the scenes witnessed by Wetzstein led Budde (*The New World*, 1894) to formulate a theory according to which Canticles is a collection of songs brought together by an old wedding poet from his lore. It describes a wedding at which the bridegroom and

bride are not only compared with king and queen, but with King Solomon and the Shunemite Abishag (1 Kings 1 : 3 ff.). The threshing-table is the palanquin of Solomon, the shepherd boys the life-guard of Solomon. The bridegroom has a perfect harem, the bridesmaids, also represented as daughters of Jerusalem. The sword-dance is found in 6 : 4–10, *wasfs* on the bride are seen in 4 : 1–7; 7 : 1–8; and on the bridegroom in 5 : 10–16; 1 : 9–2 : 4. All descriptions are taken to refer to wedded love, and all pictures of natural scenery as covered allusions to the complete satisfaction of the sexual instincts in wedlock. The wine is sexual intercourse, the grapes are the breasts, the lilies the lips, feeding one's flock among lilies is kissing, the picking of myrrh and balsam is also osculation, the house of wine is the bridal chamber, also called the mountain of myrrh or the hill of incense, the vineyard is the body of the bride, the husband an apple-tree, and the like. Stade, Kamphausen, and others have adopted the theory; Siegfried has applied it in greatest detail.

There are some serious objections to this interpretation. If the idea were correct that these are the songs used at a wedding, they certainly would appear in a different order. The supposed *wasfs* are no more in their proper places than the supposed bridal procession. The assumption that it is wedded love which is described in Canticles is wholly gratuitous. In 2 : 8–17 the lover peeps in through the window; in 3 : 1–5 the heroine runs through the

streets asking for her lover that she might bring him to her mother's house; in 5 : 2–9 she is alone in bed, and when he knocks at the door goes out in search for him, and is insulted and beaten by the watchers of the city. What kind of wedded life is this? Resort has to be had again to dreams or stories of the past told by the unblushing bride. But if a bride could tell of such things having occurred in her past life, why should not such things have actually occurred? And if they really took place, why should not a poet have put the story on the lips of an unwed maiden? To seek for a *double entendre* in every phrase is wholly unwarranted. To convert every innocent and delicate description of natural scenery into an allusion to things sexual is to introduce an allegorical method scarcely to be preferred to any of its predecessors, and already showing signs of demanding a tropological and analogical sense beside the literal. To parade in vulgar display the *naturalia* on the plea that *naturalia non sunt turpia*, when they have once been sanctified by the license of church or society, is to render a questionable service to morality. By the attempt to unfold a latent *nuptiarum arcana*, the natural meaning of the language is again in danger of being lost. What has been called "*die Leidensgeschichte des Hohenliedes*" is not ended yet.

On the other hand, there has been a tendency to exaggerate the regularity of Jewish family life and the utterly dependent and subordinate position of women. When it is

maintained that "there is no individual action separating itself from the forms of society and the custom" (Siegfried), it is forgotten that the transition from polygamy to monogamy as the normal type of marriage, characteristic of the Greek period to which these songs belong, involved, as the nature of the case demands and the wisdom books testify, an increased deviation from the forms of society and the custom, more sentiment and mutuality of affection, more freedom and more rebellion against parental authority and conjugal tyranny. Greek and Aramaic influences affected the position of women. Besides, peasant and shepherd communities were, no doubt, much easier in their social arrangements than urban communities; and human hearts are very much the same in all ages. The analogies of Egyptian life point to love before or aside from marriage. "Sister" is not necessarily "wife"; "friend" and "beloved" not necessarily "betrothed wife." The poets of the ages have far more frequently sung the love that comes regardless of social customs than the love with which husband and wife are commanded to love each other. It is noticeable that in the modern wedding songs quoted the singer is never the bridegroom or the bride, but a third person, and the age of the customs described is altogether unknown. This epithalamic theory cannot be maintained without violence to the language, and is not probable.

### 7. *An Anthology of Love Lyrics*

Peter Nannius, in 1544, suggested that Canticles is a collection of eclogues; and Luis de Leon, in 1569, declared: "todo este libro es una Egloga pastoril." In 1644 Hugo Grotius pointed out the similarity to Theocritus and declared Canticles to be written in the form of an oaristys, like the eighteenth idyl of the Sicilian poet. In his dissertation on eclogues, René Rapin, in 1659, expressed the view that the book contains a number of eclogues. Charles Cotin, in 1662 and 1663, suggested that in many places Canticles was written in the manner of madrigals. This apparently was also the opinion of Richard Simon (1678). Jean le Clerc (1685) regarded the book as made up of "idyls more dithyrambic than the eclogues of the Greeks and the Romans." Charles Claude Genest, in 1707, discussing idyls and eclogues, expressed the conviction that the author of the poem ascribed to Solomon had read the Greek author Theocritus and endeavored to copy his style. Johann Theophil Lessing, brother of Gottlieb Ephraim Lessing, in 1777, published Canticles as a collection of eclogues. Without defining the particular type, Herder regarded the book as an anthology of love-songs, and Goethe at first accepted this view, though he was later led to approve of an attempted dramatic construction. Among commentators none has treated Canticles from this point of view with more delicacy and insight than Edouard

Reuss (1871), who called attention to the poet's peculiar manner of making the woman with whom he is in love the speaker by preference.

While the similarity to Theocritus has impressed many interpreters, the present writer has been even more struck with the resemblance to such poets as Meleager and Philodemus in the *Anthologia Palatina*. They were also natives of Palestine. Both of them were born at Gadara; their early life was spent in the East Jordan country. It was the natural scenery of this region that developed their sense for the beauty of nature, their appreciation of the glories of a rich landscape, their fondness for describing love as stirred and affected by the ebb and flow of nature's life. It was there they learned to weave their garlands of exquisite lyrics, to bring together the best of their own and what they deemed worthy from other sources into a *stephanos*, a *florilegium*, an anthology, a *diwan*. It is quite possible that Meleager, who lived in the beginning of the first century B. C., had his predecessors, that some Greek poet had already gathered together love-songs in this fashion before his time in the Decapolis. It is interesting to observe that in the songs of Meleager there are references to a Jew who was favored by one of his Greek-speaking mistresses, *Anthol. Pal.*, V, 160, Tauchniz ed. Such an anthology *more Græco* the author of Canticles produced.

### 8. *Unity and Integrity*

Those critics who have perceived the nature of Canticles as an anthology of love lyrics, have frequently regarded the songs as coming from different authors, and therefore denied that there is any real unity. This weakness in the theory most closely associated with Herder's name has always been a temptation to minds impressed with the similarity of style, thought, and situation in the different parts to fall back again upon some scheme of dramatic construction. It is indeed probable that some parts of Canticles do not come from the original author, are the flotsam and jetsam of erotic poetry drifting in, no man knows whence, and becoming attached to the text in the tavern where wine flows or in the chamber where such scrolls are copied. While it cannot be proved, it is not impossible that the author incorporated some songs sung as *wasfs* on the bride and the groom at a wedding. One misses the dainty and delicate touch of the best of the eclogues in these somewhat redundant descriptions. Where the same motive has been used as in the sixth and the tenth canticle, there is so marked a contrast between the exquisite workmanship of the former and the labored, clumsy, indelicate portrayal of the lover in the latter that it is natural to think at least of an expansion from an inferior source. "The daughters of Jerusalem," in the last line, is a term that possibly indicates later origin,

though "Jerusalem" may have been substituted for some other place-name in the earlier song. A number of refrains mentioning the women of Jerusalem show themselves by metre and contents to be interpolations, probably made by the gay youth of the capital. The last two canticles likewise reveal by their metre and strophic structure as well as by their peculiar sentiment their character of late additions to the text.

But aside from these excrescences there is such an evident unity of style and conception that the authorship of the bulk of the songs by the same poet can scarcely be doubted. What is most conclusive on this point is the author's unique method of putting himself in the position of his amorata and placing on her own lips the story of her love for him. There is originality as well as piquancy and charm in this.

The canticles do not seem to have suffered much by transposition of lines. When a few manifest interpolations are removed, the situations are rightly understood, and the text is restored as it can be with the aid of the versions and an occasional conjectural emendation, the present order of the canticles and the strophes and lines within each canticle is far preferable to any rearrangement. Professor Paul Haupt has often, with his learning and insight, thrown light on the meaning of obscure phrases in Canticles; but he has deemed it necessary to assume transpositions on so large a scale that the result is an

entirely new series of canticles. Except in very rare instances, the new songs seem to be no improvement on the old. There is no evidence to support these changes, and no analogy by which such a drastic and arbitrary treatment could be justified.

### 9. *The Authorship*

The superscription ascribes the book to Solomon. How old the addition of his name to the title is cannot be absolutely determined. It is probable, however, that it was either the conception of Canticles as a wisdom-book (the Syriac version calls it "Wisdom of Wisdoms") or the mention of Solomon's name in a few places that caused him to be regarded as the author. The manner in which he is referred to should have precluded the idea; but the editors of the Psalms were often more easily satisfied that they had found a hint of authorship and occasion in the author's life. The language is sufficient to show that Solomon could not have written this work. He could as little have used the late forms of Hebrew speech, characteristic of the Mishnaic period or the Aramaisms, as he could have indulged in Persian words, like *pardes*, or Greek words, like *phoreion*; and the sentiment is equally far removed from his age or his court. What his one thousand and five songs (1 Kings 5 : 12) were like we cannot say. But the one hundred and sixteen verses of Canticles certainly formed

no part of his diwan. Concerning the real author we know neither his name nor the circumstances of his life, but only what his poems tell us of his thoughts and sentiments, his gifts of observation and his art.

### 10. *The Date*

Those who regarded Solomon as the author looked upon Canticles as a work written in the beginning of the tenth century B. C. When the tradition preserved in Baba bathra 13b, 14a, ascribes the poems to Hezekiah and his companions, it probably is to be understood as affirming that Canticles had come down by oral transmission from Solomon and been committed to writing by Hezekiah and his men. The statement of Dom Calmet that some rabbis considered Isaiah as the author is probably due to a misunderstanding of the Talmudic passage. A mistaken idea of the period of David and Solomon as the golden age of Hebrew literature led many scholars who rejected the Solomonic authorship to assign a very high age to Canticles. Even those who perceived the close relationship to Theocritus supposed, as did Samuel Wesley (1736) and J. T. Lessing (1777), that the Sicilian poet read in Egypt the Greek version of Solomon's work. In modern times Hermann von der Hardt (before 1706) maintained that Canticles was written in the reign of John Hyrcanus (134–104 B. C.). Charles Claude Genest (1707) expressed the

conviction that the author of the poem ascribed to Solomon had read the Greek author Theocritus and consequently wrote after the time of Ptolemy III (247–221 B. C.). Benjamin Kennicott seems to have been the first scholar to base his judgment as to the late origin of Canticles on linguistic considerations. In 1753 he declared that Canticles was post-exilic, pointing especially to the spelling of David's name. A. T. Hartmann, in 1829, concluded on similar grounds that it was written in the Macedonian period. The dependence upon Theocritus has been brought out especially by Grätz (1871) and Martineau (1892); and even students who regard the numerous and close similarities as accidental are at the present time inclined to assign the work to the third or the second century. There is nothing in the language forbidding the assumption that it was written as late as in the beginning of the first century B. C. If the idea of an anthology was suggested by Meleager's, or the author was otherwise influenced by the Gadarene poet, as he certainly was by Theocritus, this would be a probable date. But there may have been such anthologies before Meleager. It is probable that Canticles in its original form was somewhat older than the Psalter of Solomon. The later additions were no doubt made in Jerusalem before the question of canonicity was seriously agitated.

### 11. *The Place of Composition*

It is not possible to determine with certainty where Canticles was written from the names of localities occurring in the poems. The references to Kedar's and Salama's tents, to Engedi's henna clusters, and to the lilies of Sharon no more show that the songs originated in the south than those to Hermon and Lebanon that they came from the north, or "the daughters of Jerusalem" that they were written in the capital. So far as the allusions to the women of Jerusalem are concerned, they probably are all due to the hands that added the final touches, the refrains to some of the songs. The author was no doubt familiar with various parts of the country. But the distinct references to objects seen in Heshbon, Rabbath Ammon(?), and Damascus render it probable that the territory of the Greek Decapolis was the poet's home, and the unmistakable similarity between him and the Greek poets who in this lovely region learned to describe with such delight the beauties of nature points in the same direction. It may be supposed that the author wrote in the Decapolis, south of Damascus, and that his anthology found its way to Jerusalem where it assumed its present form.

### 12. *The Moral and Religious Message*

When the mystical sense could no longer be maintained, and yet the feeling remained that Providence would not

have permitted the book to occupy a place in the canon of Holy Scripture, unless it was calculated to serve a high and noble purpose, recourse was often had to the assumption that Canticles was divinely intended to teach the desirability and blessedness of lawful wedlock by celebrating the pleasures that may be enjoyed by men and women living in the state of matrimony. In order to bring out this lesson, almost as much violence has been done to Canticles in the last decades as was done in past centuries by the allegorical method or the ill-starred attempts at dramatic construction. These songs were not written to teach the value of any institution, be it ever so good and desirable. Not wedded love, nor betrothed love, but love, the love of man and woman, is the subject, and to sing it well, to give it the most beautiful expression, was the author's only purpose. Canticles is *das Hohelied der Liebe*. To make it anything else is to make it something less. It is a pæan setting forth the glory of love's eternal yearning, joy, and strength. It sings the praise of the greatest force in the world, that which builds the universe, from atom to man, draws individuals together in fruitful union, forms the foundation on which alone their mutual relations can profitably rest, rears families, organizes society, interprets nature, lifts aloft shining ideals, and gives the touch divine to all existence. Granted that the love described in the poems has not yet risen to be the glorious reality it is to modern man, that it is simple, sensuous, and unreflecting.

It needs no apology. The nature is in it. It is big with the potentialities of the future. "Love," says Renan, "has above it only virtue and genius." But the virtue that is devoid of love is a sounding brass, and the genius that places itself above love is a clanging cymbal. The vital message of Canticles does not depend upon the construction of the text that reads into it, in a wholly unwarranted manner, a conflict between a voluptuous Oriental despot and a chaster shepherd for the heart of a maiden, remaining true to her former lover in the midst of the seductions of a royal harem. Such an inner struggle and trial of love's strength would indeed add to its ethical value in our eyes. But these things are the dreams of exegetes; and their absence in the poems only shows that time had not yet come, social institutions had not yet developed sufficiently, this artist's brain had not yet felt the necessary impulse, for a portrayal of the more advanced conception of love this would imply.

As long as religion was associated with a certain set of functions, was consigned to a special department of the soul's life, as long as the most intimate and sacred relations of man and woman were looked upon shamefacedly as concessions to a lustful nature, as carnal love unworthy of consideration by the side of the higher forms of spiritual affection, as long as love itself was in its chrysalis state, having not yet revealed its true nature as a spiritual fellowship based on the diversities implied in sex, the mystics

were right in seeking for a hidden meaning. It was the voice of the human heart crying out its defiant affirmation of the divinity of love. Regardless of time and space, in the midst of the changing fortunes of life, in the face of death and hell, it must needs sing, in jubilant strains, its joy of devotion and possession. Whether the object of worshipful meditation was Israel's God, the Christ, or the Virgin Mary, the mystic sought for something that could purge and lift, inspire and satisfy as only true love can. He prepared the way.

Until religion is understood as a devotion to the highest, permeating every part of man's life, until the love that binds a man and a woman in perfect harmony and utter devotion is recognized as of itself so sacred that no human institution can add aught to it or detract from it, until this love itself learns how to bring with it something of the rich heritage of the life of the senses into the higher latitudes of the life of the spirit, there is the real danger of a secularizing process that sacrifices these tender creations to the contaminating breath of frivolity and lawlessness, and a certain historic justification may be accorded to the epithalamic theory. When these things shall have come, there will no longer be any question as to the religious significance of these beautiful love lyrics.

## II

### THE FIRST CANTICLE
(*Chap.* 1 : 1–6)

### 1. *The Translation*

A young woman's appeal to a popular lover

O kiss me with one of thy kisses,
For better than wine is thy love,
Thy fragrance than oil that is poured out,
And therefore the maidens love thee.

"Draw me! we will run in thy footsteps.
Take me to thy chamber, O king!
With thee we will dance and have pleasure,
Will drink of thy love more than wine."

Though swarthy I am, I am comely,
Like Kedar's and Salama's tents,
Look not at my dusky complexion,
The sun scanned too closely my face.

The sons of my mother in anger
Sent me as a keeper of vines;
While I cared for many a vineyard,
I could not my own vineyard keep.

### 2. *The Exposition*

In this song a beautiful young woman sings her love for the one whom her heart has chosen. She longs for his caresses and freely avows it. He is worthy of love, and his attractiveness is felt by many. It is with pride she points to the fact that the maidens are fond of him. They show their preference for him. When he leads the rustic dance, each wants to take hold of his hand and be carried on in the wild whirl of pleasure. As the excitement grows, they express in the plainest terms what they wish. The restraints are loosened, and each cries for the bliss only he can bestow: "Take me to thy chamber, O king!" What they all desire is to dance and enjoy themselves with him, to drink of the cup of love that intoxicates more than wine. She herself feels the same mad impulse, and her frankness is only a shade less pronounced than theirs. Will she be overlooked? Will he notice how dark she is and compare her sunburnt complexion with their white skin? But though she may be as black as the tents the Kedarenes and Salamæans pitch in the desert, she knows that she is beautiful. He will surely understand that it is only the sun that has taken too much pleasure in looking at her features, and she could not help it. For her brothers had been angry with her and sent her out as a vineyard keeper. And the cause he knows: she too is desirable and full of tender promptings.

The dance thought of may have been that of the Xylophoria. At this festival of Wood-Bringing, Taanith 31a tells us: "the virgins went out in the vineyards and danced; it is taught: he who had no wife went there." The festival held on the 15th of Ab is mentioned by Josephus, *Bell. Jud.*, II, 425, and frequently in the Talmud, as well as in Neh. 10 : 34; 13 : 30, and probably also in Judges 21 : 21–23. It is evident that on such an occasion, when the young women danced with a view to being captured, there must have been a good deal of abandon and freedom of speech. The poet who has a special penchant for placing on the lips of woman a naïve and outspoken confession of her love is likely to have found in this situation material that struck his fancy, and has certainly succeeded in reproducing the rural atmosphere, while presenting his favorite theme.

## III

### THE SECOND CANTICLE
(*Chap.* 1 : 7–8)

#### 1. *The Translation*

A beautiful shepherdess seeks her lover among the flocks

O thou whom I dearly love, tell me
Where thou thy rest takest at noon.
Why must like a stranger I wander
Where comrades of thine tend their flocks?

O thou among women the fairest!
Wouldst know, only follow the flock,
And lead out thy kids in the pastures
Where their tents the shepherds have pitched.

### 2. *The Exposition*

In this eclogue shepherdesses are speaking. One desires to know where her best beloved rests at noon that she might see him. She finds it hard to go from flock to flock, as though she were offering herself to the shepherds, while in reality she is looking for him only whom her soul loves. The other shepherdesses praise her beauty and assure her that she will find him. He will be in some place where shepherds have pitched their tents.

## IV

### THE THIRD CANTICLE
(*Chaps.* 1 : 9–2 : 5)

### 1. *The Translation*

A fond discourse of lovers

*He:* To steed before Pharaoh's chariots
I liken thee, O my dear friend.
Thy cheeks are adorned with spangles,
With beautiful jewels thy neck.

*She:* A bundle of myrrh is my lover
That nightly rests between my breasts,
A cluster of henna my darling,
From Engedi's gardens it comes.

*He:* Behold thou art fair, my beloved,
As lovely as doves are thine eyes.
*She:* Behold, thou art handsome, my lover,
Right pleasant thou art and most fair.

*Both:* Our bed let us spread in the forest,
And green is the couch we shall choose,
Our house shall have cedars for rafters,
Cypresses we have for its walls.

*She:* A rose only am I in Sharon,
A lily am I of the plains.
*He:* As lily is, placed among thistles,
My love among women appears.

*She:* As apple-tree is in the forest,
My lover appears among men.
I rest in its shadow so gladly,
And sweet to my taste is its fruit.

Take me to the tavern where wine flows,
The house that has love for its sign.
Refresh me with cates of sweet raisins,
My strength there with apples revive.

### 2. *The Notes*

Verses 6 and 7 seem to be later additions, as both metre and contents indicate. It is natural that when this canticle was sung in the wine-shops of Jerusalem the heated imagination of the revellers should have been unwilling to stop where the poet did. A distich describing the embrace, and an irregular tetrastich adjuring the women of Jerusalem not to interfere with passion until it has found its complete satisfaction were introduced. To swear by the gazelles and hinds of the field is to swear by those graceful creatures the women resemble, and should be like in the respect desired.

Verses 11 and 12 are also later interpolations. "We will make for thee plaits of gold with studs of silver" is a statement introducing, in a manner not warranted by the context, new speakers and, in a manner not to be credited to our poet, a very clumsy idea. Equally incongruous in this connection is the sentence: "When the king is in his bed, my spikenard gives forth its fragrance." It was probably suggested by verse 13 and brought in as a gloss from the same source as 2 : 6, 7.

### 3. *The Exposition*

This canticle is an oaristys, or fond discourse of lovers, after the fashion of the eighteenth of the idyls of Theocritus. From the pronouns it is clear that the speakers are a man

and a woman, and what is said by each. The comparison with a noble steed, a fine mare, is found also in Theocritus (18 : 30 f.). The choicest of horses were selected for the chariots of the Egyptian kings. The title Pharaoh was still given to the Ptolemies, and would have been used in Syria from old habit even if it had not continued to be employed officially in Egypt. Among some of the Oriental nations the sense of smell seems to be more closely connected with the emotional life than it is with us; the passions are excited by odors, and perfumes of one kind or another are used by men as well as by women. The lovers lie down on the green leaves wherever night overtakes them, and they need no other rafters and walls than the cedars and cypresses of the forest. This free and glorious life out-of-doors has to them a peculiar charm. Whatever is most beautiful reminds of the beloved, the graceful anemone on the plain of Sharon, the fruitful apple-tree in the wood. Like thistles and common trees are all the rest. As sweet as the shade of the apple-tree and the fruit it gives is to her the enjoyment of her lover's caresses. They refresh and revive her as wine, sweet raisins, and apples.

## V

### THE FOURTH CANTICLE
(*Chap.* 2 : 8–13)

### 1. *The Translation*

The young woman anticipates her lover and his early greeting

My lover's voice! Lo, he comes!
He over the mountains leaps,
He skips along on the hills,
The hillocks by Bethel's town.

My lover is like a gazelle,
Or a young fawn of the hinds.
He stands there behind our wall,
He peeps through the window in.

In this way my lover speaks:
"Arise, my beauty, my friend!
For, lo! the winter is past,
The rain is parted and gone;

"The flowers are seen in the land,
The time of pruning is near,
The turtle-dove's voice is heard,
The vine puts its foliage forth.

"The fig-trees are now in bloom,
They send forth a fragrance sweet.
Arise, get thee up, my dear,
My fair one, my friend, come out!"

### 2. *The Notes*

The fourth line of the first tetrastich has been somehow transferred to verse 17, where it is clearly redundant. It has apparently been attached to the second line of the next stanza in the Greek, where it reads: "upon the mountains of Baithel." There was a Bethuel, or Bethel, in the Negeb, probably at Halasa; there was another north of Jerusalem. There may have been some Bethel in the region of the Decapolis. Baitylia were found in many places in earlier days; and the Baitylion of Judith is scarcely identical with any of the other Bethels known.

### 3. *The Exposition*

This canticle is a monologue in which the love-lorn maiden is represented as figuring to herself the approach of her lover and his greeting. It is an early morning in the spring. She has not risen yet from her bed. But she hears his voice as he comes near to her cottage. She can follow his graceful movements as he skips over the hills, all eagerness to enjoy her company. Now he is there,

peeping in through the window, as rustic lovers in all lands have occasionally done. But never did an unbred country lad outside his lassie's window in the early morning hours extend to her an invitation so delicate in sentiment, so rich in imagination, so dignified in its simplicity, so chaste and exquisite in its reserve, so instinct with the sense of nature's beauty, so absolutely free from the slightest taint of vulgar sensuality, so pure, so graceful, so ethereal. There is the warmth of amorous feeling, but not the hot blast of consuming passion. The atmosphere is clear and sweet and fresh as is the summer morn under the Syrian sky. No matter how refined the age, such words would grace the lips of any maiden. There is something of the light and airy touch of Kalidasa in these lines.

## VI

### THE FIFTH CANTICLE

(*Chap.* 2 : 14–17)

#### 1. *The Translation*

The maiden's answer to her insistent lover

*He:* My dove in the clefts of the rocks,
In caves of the mountains' slope!
O let me thy figure behold!
Thy voice let me hear once more!

*She:* Come, let us these foxes chase,
These sly little foxes catch!
So many a garden they spoil,
Our gardens are blooming now.

Till the day begins to grow cool,
And shadows begin to fall,
Run thou like a roe, my love,
Like a young fawn of the hinds!

### 2. *The Notes*

"For thy voice is sweet and thy form is pleasant" is a gloss, and so is "my lover is mine and I am his who leads his flock among lilies," and also "on the mountains of Bether" (or Bethel) which is redundant in verse 17 and belongs to the first stanza of the preceding canticle.

### 3. *The Exposition*

In this pastoral dialogue the lover bids his shepherdess to come out of her hiding-place in some cleft or cave whither the heat of the day has sent her for shelter that he might see her beloved form and hear her voice. She first turns to her companions, the other shepherdesses, summoning them to chase these sly little foxes away, the young men who craftily seek to lure them astray. They are such robbers, never satisfied till they have spoiled the gardens;

and they know full well, she cunningly hints, where the finest gardens are. Having disarmed the suspicions of her companions by this flattery, she ostentatiously sends her shepherd away, bids him run like a roe or a young fawn all through the day. But he understands the implied suggestion. The day will grow cool at length and the shadows begin to fall. Then there is hope.

## VII

### THE SIXTH CANTICLE

(*Chap.* 3 : 1–4)

#### 1. *The Translation*

The young woman's search for her beloved

At night, while resting on my bed,
I longed for him whom I desire.
"I will arise and go through town,
Through all its streets and public squares;

"I will seek him whom my soul loves."
I sought him and I found him not.
Some wanderers met me in the town.
"Have ye seen him whom I adore?"

Scarce had I passed these wanderers by,
When him I found whom my soul loves.
I held him, would not let him leave,
I brought him to my mother's house.

### 2. *The Notes*

"I found him not" in verse 1 is redundant and has crept in from the end of verse 2 where it is in its right place. "The keepers" are also a reminiscence from another canticle. Those that walk about in the city are not policemen in this song. "To the chamber of her who conceived me" is also an addition taken from another song. And all of verse 5 is a refrain probably due to the young men who, incited by the last gloss, added in Jerusalem a remark that was to their taste. The metre is different.

### 3. *The Exposition*

In this monologue it is again, as in the fourth canticle, a loving woman who tells the story of her amorous desire. But there is more passion in her longing and an unbearable sense of loneliness. Her couch gives her no rest, her heart is full, she can endure no longer. She must go out in search for him. She asks some men who wander about in the streets if they have seen him. The answer is not given, but must have been in the negative. Soon, however, she finds him, and will not let him leave, but brings him to her mother's house.

Compared with the tenth canticle, there is in this song a certain admirable restraint. There is a brevity, a reserve, a suppression in speech by which the depth of emotion is

only the more accentuated. The situation reflects life in an urban community where a young woman living with her mother enjoys a degree of freedom not to be looked for in Muslim harems but in all probability not unusual in the period when this poet lived. The heroine is in dead earnest; she looks for her lover and him alone; she wants nothing of the wanderers save information concerning his whereabouts.

## VIII

### THE SEVENTH CANTICLE

(*Chap.* 3 : 6–11)

#### 1. *The Translation*

The sumptuous palanquin of King Solomon

What is this coming up from the desert,
Like a rising pillar of smoke,
Like an offering of myrrh and incense,
Of all spices the merchant sells?

Behold, it is Solomon's carriage,
Sixty heroes stand round about.
With swords they are all of them girded,
They have all learned the art of war.

The king a palanquin constructed.
From Lebanon's heights came the wood,
Its pillars of silver were fashioned,
Its covering was of pure gold.

Of ebony fine was its seat made,
The ceiling was inlaid with gems.
Come out, O Jerusalem's women!
Ye daughters of Zion, take note!

See the crown that king Solomon wore,
Which his mother placed on his head,
On the day when his nuptials were held,
On the day when his heart was glad.

### 2. *The Exposition*

This canticle gives a detailed description of Solomon's gala-carriage and refers to the crown he wore on his wedding day. From the wilderness of Judah it approaches the city, raising a cloud of dust. The palanquin is a work of art, made of costly wood covered with gold and silver, and inlaid with gems. Sixty warriors stand round about it. The crown which Solomon wore may be seen and admired by the women of Jerusalem. Why did the poet draw this picture? It is held by many scholars that he wished to describe a bridal procession, in which the bridegroom impersonated King Solomon and his friends the warriors of Solomon. He is on his way to secure his queen, the queen of his heart, and on his head is a crown that may, therefore, be regarded as Solomon's crown. Because of this impersonation, his simple carriage may, with poetic

license, be described in terms that would suit the royal carriage of Solomon. While this is not impossible, no evidence has yet been produced that, in Jewish circles, bridegroom and bride ever impersonated on their wedding day Solomon and the Shunemite, or king and queen at all. It may be that the song is a royal epithalamion, like Ps. 45, in honor of a later Jewish king, Alexander Jannæus or Hyrcanus II, who is represented as using Solomon's carriage and Solomon's crown. It is so different in style from the poems characteristic of our author that it may well have been added to the anthology from some other source.

## IX

### THE EIGHTH CANTICLE

(*Chap.* 4 : 1–7)

#### 1. *The Translation*

In praise of the beloved one

Behold, thou art fair, my love.
Behold, thou hast eyes like doves,
And hair like a flock of goats
That rush down Gilead's slopes.

Thy teeth are a flock of ewes,
That come refreshed from the bath,
And all of them bearing twins,
Not one of them barren is.

Thy lips are a scarlet thread,
And beautiful is thy mouth.
Thy cheek is a pomegranate,
And out it peeps through thy veil.

Thy neck is like David's tower;
'Twas built for an arsenal,
Where a thousand bucklers hang,
All the shields of heroes great.

Thy two breasts are like young fawns
That pasture where lilies grow.
When the day begins to decline,
And the shadows grow in length,

To mountains of myrrh I speed,
To the hills of incense go.
Thou art fair, my dearest friend,
No fault can be found in thee.

### 2. *The Exposition*

In this canticle the poet describes his beloved. There is no intimation that she is his bride, or wife, or fiancée. Her eyes, hair, teeth, lips, cheek, neck, and breasts are praised. The comparison with doves, goats, ewes, pomegranates, and fawns, while somewhat crude, are not without a quaint grace. That of her neck with David's tower

is the least effective, and his evident purpose to praise her by this comparison for her many victories in love, while in harmony with the poet's feelings elsewhere expressed, may not be altogether to our taste. He has evidently seen the slopes of Gilead. In the evening he hopes to meet his beloved.

## X

### THE NINTH CANTICLE
(*Chaps.* 4 : 8–5 : 1)

#### 1. *The Translation*

The lover declares the charms of his beloved

*He:* Come, my bride, from Lebanon;
Come with me from Lebanon!
From the top of Amana,
From Senir and Hermon turn!

Sister, thou hast captured me,
Caught me with those eyes of thine,
With a turn of thy proud neck.
Sweet, my sister, is thy love.

Better is thy love than wine,
And thy fragrance than all spice;
Honey lies upon thy lips,
Sweetest milk beneath thy tongue.

A closed garden is my bride,
Spring shut up and fountain sealed;
A pomegranate park thy lap,
With its very precious fruit,

Nard, calamus, cinnamon,
And all trees of frankincense,
Saffron, myrrh, and aloes,
And of spices what is best.

*She:* North-wind, wake, and come south-wind,
Stir the garden, perfume spread!
Let my love his garden see,
Let him eat its precious fruit,

*He:* To my garden I have come,
Myrrh and balsam gather here,
Honey-comb and honey eat,
And my wine and milk I drink.

### 2. *The Exposition*

In this dialogue six stanzas are spoken by the lover, only one by his beloved. He calls her "my bride" and "my sister." It is difficult to say how much may be inferred from either term as to their official relationship. The mention of Lebanon, Amana, Senir, and Hermon may indicate that her home was in the north and that she was

a stranger in the parts where the poet lived. He praises her love, her kisses, and her maidenhood. She invites him, with frank outspokenness, to the full enjoyment of her love, and he describes his eager acceptance. The stranger has captured him with one glance of her eyes, one turn of her proud neck. He is pleased to think that this neck is not like David's arsenal, where a thousand bucklers of great heroes have hung. Like Meleager our poet probably had his experiences. The singer of love is often *polytropos*, turned by his heart in many directions, and there is no telling whether the Lebanon district gave him a Penelope or a Calypso.

## XI

### THE TENTH CANTICLE
(*Chap.* 5 : 2–16)

#### 1. *Translation*

The maiden, seeking her lover, describes his beauty.

I was asleep, but my heart waked,
My lover called: "Open for me!
Wet with the dew my head is now,
And with the drops of night my locks."

"My tunic I have taken off,
How should I put it on once more?
My feet with water I have washed,
How should I soil them now again?"

He stretched his hand in through the hole,
And O! for him my heart was moved.
I rose to let my darling in,
And then my hands dripped with the myrrh.

I opened for my love myself.
Alas! my lover was not there.
My soul was troubled for his sake,
I sought him and I found him not.

I cried, but he no answer gave.
The watchers of the walls found me.
They beat me, roughly treated me.
My veil they lifted from my face.

"O women, I would have you swear,
Daughters of Zion, if ye find
My lover, that ye let him know
How I am pining for his love."

"What is thy lover, fairest maid,
That in this way thou adjur'st us?"
"Fair is my lover, ruddy too,
The chiefest of ten thousand he.

"His head is of the purest gold,
His locks are as the ravens black,
His eyes like doves in the ravines,
Washed as with milk, perched by the streams.

'His cheeks like beds of balsam are,
Like towers rising from afar.
His lips the reddest lilies are,
And with the flowing myrrh they drip.

'Like golden circles are his hands,
That have been set with Tarshish gems.
His belly is an ivory seat
That is inlaid with sapphire stones.

"His legs like porphyry columns are
That rest on golden pedestals.
His figure is like Lebanon,
As choice as is a cypress-tree;

"And full of sweetness is his mouth,
Yea, all of him is my delight.
This is the one I dearly love,
Ye women of Jerusalem."

### 2. *The Exposition*

The *motif* in this canticle is the same as in the sixth. It is also reminiscent of the fourth. There is not the same reserve and delicate grace, however, as in those masterpieces. Yet the first part of the canticle may come from the hand of the original poet, who wished to vary his earlier themes. The opening line is exquisite. It is in

the night or early morning. The lover knocks at the door; but his beloved hesitates to put on her tunic and soil her feet once more. He stretches in his hand through the hole attempting to open the door from without. This stirs the compassion of the young woman, and she goes to open for him. As she touches the hole in the door, her hands drip with myrrh left by his hand or his lips. But he is gone. When she seeks him in the city, the watchers of the walls beat her and raise her veil. The original song may have ended with this, suggesting the moral that if a young woman will not open the door for her lover, desire for him may lead her into danger, and she may be punished by the rough treatment the guardians of the city's walls may find it proper and diverting to accord to a woman walking the streets alone in the dead of night.

The singer who gave to this canticle its present form in Jerusalem could see no objection to introducing a group of women found at that time of the night in the streets of the capital. It probably seemed to him a clever idea to have the heroine put these women under oath that they would let him know how she is pining for love of him. If he should accost them, let them be sure to deliver the message. But how shall they know him? She will describe him so that there can be no mistake. Hair, eyes, cheeks, lips, hands, legs, and trunk are then pictured forth. If *wasfs* on the bridegroom were sung in those days, this may have been drawn from such a descriptive song. But

there certainly is nothing in the situation that suggests a wedding. No part of the canticle is compatible with the notion that it celebrates wedded love. Neither during the nuptials nor ever after is it likely to behave in this manner.

## XII

### THE ELEVENTH CANTICLE
(*Chap.* 6 : 1–3)

#### 1. *The Translation*

The maiden's response to the inquiring women

Whither is thy lover gone,
Fairest among women?
Whither has thy darling turned?
Let us seek him with thee.

To his garden he has gone,
For to gather balsam,
Of his garden taste the fruit,
Make his choice of lilies.

#### 2. *The Exposition*

In this dainty little madrigal a company of women are represented as asking the heroine where her lover is gone and offering their assistance in seeking him. She answers with happy assurance that she knows full well where he

has gone. He has walked down into his garden to pick fruit and flowers, and there she will find him. To look for allegorical meanings in these lines is particularly inadmissible, as she would not be alone and seeking him, if her body were the garden meant, to which he had gone, and she would not refer to a rival as "his garden." The literal sense is the only natural one and presents a charming idyl of a summer's day. "I belong to my lover and my lover is mine who feeds his flock among lilies," verse 3, is a refrain not belonging to the original canticle.

## XIII

### THE TWELFTH CANTICLE
(*Chap.* 6 : 8–10)

#### 1. *The Translation*

The lover prefers and exalts his beloved

Of queens there are full three-score,
Of concubines full four-score,
And maidens without number.
Yet only one is my dove.

Her mother finds her perfect,
And pure she who once bare her,
Women see her and bless her,
Yea, queens themselves must praise her.

She looks forth like the morning,
As lovely as the moon is,
And as the sun she pure is,
And terrible as Nergal.

### 2. *The Notes*

Between this and the preceding canticle there are in verses 4–7 a number of lines copied from another song and a tristich that may have come from some lost canticle. This tristich reads:

"Thou art fair, my friend, as Thirza,
Pleasant as Jerusalem,
Terrible as is Megiddo(?)."

Thirza was chosen because of the meaning of the name, and to avoid the mention of Shechem or Samaria, which would have suggested the homes of the Samaritan sect. The letters forming the word *nidgaloth* probably represent some place-name, like Megiddo, in the original text. "Turn thy eyes away from me, for they disturb me" may have come from the same canticle. "Who is this?" in verse 10 is redundant and should be stricken out.

### 3. *The Exposition*

In the twelfth canticle the poet sings the praises of the mistress of his heart. He calls her "my dove." She is

the only one he cares for. Kings may have sixty queens and eighty concubines and as many maidens as they please. He is satisfied with her, and her alone. Yet there is a certain distant reverence and admiration. She belongs to her mother, and her mother knows she is perfect and pure. When women behold her, they praise her beauty; and even if queens should see her, they must needs join in the praise. She is a Diana, not a Venus. She bursts upon his vision like the rose-fingered dawn, is as lovely as the moon and as pure as the sun, but also terrible as Nergal-Mars. Like the god of war, she has come forth to conquer, and his heart has been captured. He is in the first stages of a fresh experience of love. The last stanza is a choice specimen of the poet's art.

## XIV

### THE THIRTEENTH CANTICLE

(*Chaps.* 6 : 11–7 : 9)

#### 1. *The Translation*

The dancer at the camp of Ammina-dab

To the garden of nuts I went down
To behold the green plants by the brook,
To observe if the vine was in bloom,
If the pomegranate was in flower,

If the love-apples fragrant were.
My own mind I hardly knew;
To the carriages fancy me led
Of Amminadab; then I turned.

*Ammina-* Turn about, O Shunemite, turn,
*dab's men:* Turn about, that we may look at thee.
*She:* Of the Shunemite what will ye see
In a dance of the camping-place?

*Ammina-* O how beautiful are thy feet
*dab's men:* In thy shoes, thou a noble's child!
Of thy hips the joints are like gems,
Like the work of an artist's hand.

Like a goblet round is thy lap;
May the mixed wine in it not fail!
Like a wheat-heap thy belly is,
Set about with anemones.

Thy breasts are like two young fawns,
Like the twins of a roe they are;
And thy neck like the ivory tower
In the gate of Rabbath Ammon;

Like the pools in Heshbon thine eyes,
And thy nose like Lebanon's tower,
And like Carmel thy head on thy neck,
And like royal purple thy hair.

O how fair and graceful thou art!
Thou art loved, daughter of delights.
Like a palm is thy stature tall,
And thy arms like its branches are.

Thy breasts are like clusters of grapes,
And like apples the smell of thy breath,
And thy palate is like the best wine,
Trickling down over lips and teeth.

### 2. *The Notes*

The first line of the second tetrastich has been displaced; it is found in some manuscripts of the Greek. At the end of this stanza the words "Then I turned" have fallen out of the Hebrew text. In the "Sumanite" of the Greek text *m* and *n* have been transposed. The Shunemite is an allusion to Abishag of Shunem, the most beautiful woman in Israel, and a pretty compliment to the dancer. In later times the name changed to Shulem, and the Hebrew text has recorded this change. The name of the owner of the carriages, Amminadab, has been preserved in many manuscripts of the Hebrew text, as well as in the Greek and Latin versions. For Bath Rabbim we should probably read Rabboth Ammon, called by the Greeks Philadelphia. The last line, "Trickling down over lips and teeth," was correctly understood by the Greek translators. The words

immediately preceding this phrase in the Hebrew are an explanatory gloss.

### 3. *The Exposition*

In the manner affected by him, the poet puts upon the lips of a beautiful young dancer an account of her experiences in Amminadab's camp. She went down to the nut garden to enjoy the beauties of spring, to observe the blossoms of vine, pomegranate, and love-apples. When not conscious of where she was going, but following where fancy led, she came to the camping-place where the carriages of Amminadab were and the men in charge of them lounged. When she saw where she was she turned away. But it was too late. Their flattery reached her. "Shunemite" they called her, the fairest woman in Israel. "Turn back!" they cried, "turn back that we may look at thee." She entered into the spirit of the occasion and fired the spectators by her reckish, challenging question: "What will ye see, then, of the Shunemite?" and by the abandon and grace of her dance at the camping-place. Stirred by the rhythmic movements of her body, their imagination vents itself more and more freely in the accompanying song, which describes the beauty of her feet, dainty and sandalled, as though she were a noble's daughter, her hips like those of figurines and statues the Greek artists loved to fashion, her breasts and her neck, her eyes, nose, and hair, her lap which would never lack the offerings of love,

her tall, slender form, and her lips that would always dispense their intoxicating wine. We do not know how the ivory tower looked in the gate of Philadelphia, if that was the place, and may not fancy eyes that remind of Heshbon's pools, or a nose like Lebanon's tower, any more than the allusions to things which our modern taste would rather leave out of the picture; but the poet is not to be judged by our standards, and the distance is not so great between Amminadab's camping-place and the scenes our poets have often described with a somewhat daintier touch. It is an extraordinary notion, suggested by nothing in the text, and wholly out of harmony with the setting, that this poem describes the sword-dance executed by a bride and that the men of the camp are the friends of the bridegroom; and it is quite an impenetrable mystery how the moral tone can be improved by making this dancer a newly married woman and this song a celebration of wedded love.

## XV

### THE FOURTEENTH CANTICLE

(*Chap.* 7 : 10–13)

#### 1. *The Translation*

An invitation from the young woman to her lover

I to my lover true belong,
And his desire is all for me.
Come, let us go into the field,
And let us lodge in villages;

And, rising, to the vineyards go,
See, if the vine has budded yet,
The tender grape has yet appeared,
The pomegranate has blossomed yet,

The mandrakes give their fragrance forth.
The fruits that grow beside our door,
Whether these fruits be old or new,
I have for thee, my lover, stored.

### 2. *The Exposition*

This canticle is in the poet's peculiar vein. It is the woman who speaks. She loves and lives in the happy confidence that his desire is all for her. Her heart is set upon an outing with him, and she invites him to go with her into the country, to roam about in a free and easy manner, lodging, when night comes, in the villages, and rising early in the morning to admire the beauty of nature. Such fruits as they cannot find in the field they will enjoy when they return. There is a fine air of rural simplicity and grace in this poem, and the less reason for excogitating a hidden meaning, as it would not be necessary to return to her home for the satisfaction of love.

## XVI

### THE FIFTEENTH CANTICLE
(*Chap.* 8 : 1–2)

#### 1. *The Translation*

The love-sick maiden's plaint

O that thou wert my brother,
Nursed at my mother's bosom,
I'd kiss thee when I met thee,
And none despise me for it.

To mother's house I'd take thee,
The room of her who bore me,
And make thee drunk with spiced wine,
With must of the pomegranate.

#### 2. *The Exposition*

The woman upon whose lips this song is placed is desperately in love and has suffered for showing her affection. She lives with her mother and is manifestly unmarried, since otherwise no one would despise her for kissing her husband. Would that her lover were her brother! Then she could kiss him without being looked down upon with contempt. Then there would be no disagreeable comments, if she should take him home. No finger of scorn would be raised against her, if she were closeted with him, as she has evidently been with her friend, firing his blood with the wine of her love.

# XVII

## THE SIXTEENTH CANTICLE
(*Chap.* 8 : 5–7)

### 1. *The Translation*

A pean of love

Who's this that from the desert comes,
Leaning upon her lover's arm?
I stirred thee under the apple-tree,
Where thine own mother conceived thee.

Hang me as signet on thy heart,
Wear me as bracelet round thy arm.
For strong is love as death is strong,
And passion hard as is the grave.

Its flames are like the flames of fire,
Its flashes like the lightning's sheen.
Much water never will prevail
To quench the burning fire of love,

Nor are there streams so powerful
That they can passion ever drown.
If one should give all that he has
For love, he would be only scorned.

### 2. *The Exposition*

In this canticle the poet represents the heroine who is the chief speaker as coming with her lover into the village from the wild country where they have been. He explains the situation by two lines only which he speaks to her. There is not the slightest reason for supposing that the apple-tree is anything other than an apple-tree. Under its shade her mother had given herself in love's embrace; and the daughter who was there conceived had followed the maternal example. The lover is proud and happy. But it is she who sings the pæan of love, and such is its sincerity and purity, its deep pathos and intensity of feeling, its matchless grace and death-defying strength that its equal is not easily found in all the erotic poetry of ancient times. She sings of a love that gives itself utterly and without reserve, that yearns for never-ceasing constancy, that has in it the inexorable power of death, the unyielding strength of the grave, that falls like the fire of Yah, the lightning from heaven, and consumes everything with its flames, that cannot be bought, for it is the heart's free gift. This rises far above the realm of barter and dowries, of family arrangement and convenience, of the lusts of the eye and of the flesh. It is the flame divine. It has in it something of the nature of Dante's experience: "Behold a god stronger than I who coming shall reign over me!" In these wonderful stanzas the poet celebrates

his highest triumph. He has entered woman's innermost life as nowhere else, and put upon her trembling lips a message to which the chords of the human heart will vibrate as long as man shall live.

## XVIII

### THE SEVENTEENTH CANTICLE
(*Chap.* 8 : 8–10)

#### 1. *The Translation*

The sister's rejoinder to her brothers

*The brothers:* We have a little sister,
She has as yet no breasts.
What shall we do with sister,
When she is spoken for?

Is she a wall, we will place
Upon it silver copings;
Is she an open door, will
Shut it with boards of cedar.

*She:* A wall I am, and my breasts
Have grown to be like towers.
Therefore I am in their eyes
Like one who conquests makes.

### 2. *The Notes*

A soldier who, as the fruit of his bravery, finds peace and prosperity, is one who has achieved victories and made conquests.

### 3. *The Exposition*

The poet represents the brothers of his friend, her natural guardians, as considering when she was a little girl what course to pursue with her. If she should prove to be a wall hard to besiege and raze, they would honor her; if she turned out to be an open door through which any one might enter, they would shut her up and treat her as a prisoner. Her proud answer is: "I have grown to be a strong, beautiful, and independent woman, knowing how to take care of myself and the interests of my heart. I have won my victories, made my conquests, and you now have learned to recognize that I should be treated as a conqueror." The recurrence of certain motives in a number of the songs renders it probable that the love which first taught the poet how to sing was an attachment for a black-eyed, comely young woman living in her mother's house, jealously watched by her brothers, but chafing under all restraints, passionate, self-willed, regardless of public opinion, rich in sentiment, fond of nature and the free life out-of-doors, proud of her victories, yet capable of high devotion, singularly frank and naïve, yet shy, tender,

and delicate in her feelings. Such a character is not a purely literary creation by an author like our poet. It is a copy from nature, drawn by a skilful hand, but also by a heart that beat with love and admiration.

## XIX

### THE EIGHTEENTH CANTICLE
(*Chap.* 8 : 11–12)

#### 1. *The Translation*

The lover's precious vineyard

Solomon had a vineyard in Baal Hamon,
He intrusted this vineyard to keepers.
Each man a thousand shekels received for its fruit.

A vineyard I have, and its fruit before me.
The thousand I gladly let Solomon have,
And the keepers are welcome to fruit they received.

#### 2. *The Exposition*

The first tristich refers to some current story about a rich vineyard belonging to Solomon. It yielded so much fruit that each keeper received when he sold it a thousand shekels. Alluding to the woman he had found, the author announces to the world that he does not envy King Solomon his thousand shekels nor the keepers the fruit which they kept for themselves. There is no wealth in the world like

that which a woman's love brings. The tristich and the style probably indicate that this canticle does not come from the great poet from whose pen most of the songs in this collection flowed.

## XX

### THE NINETEENTH CANTICLE
(*Chap.* 8 : 13–14)

#### 1. *The Translation*

The lover's appeal and its answer

*He:* Thou that in the garden dwell'st,
Friends are waiting for thy voice,
Cause thou me to hear it!

*She:* Flee, my lover, be thou like
To a roe, to a young hart
On the fragrant mountains!

#### 2. *The Exposition*

The last canticle, consisting of two tristichs, shows little originality. In the first stanza the lover invites his friend to sing because his comrades wish to hear her and he longs himself to hear her voice. The second is an imitation of the original poet, copying the playful refusal, but without the ingenious hint of later satisfaction. It has often been remarked that the anthology would not have suffered had it ended with the wonderful sixteenth canticle.

# MINOR POEMS

# I

## INTRODUCTION TO THE MINOR POEMS

### 1. *The Poems Included*

Almost every book in the Hebrew Bible contains some lines of poetry. Even in the midst of historical narratives poems are often inserted. Sometimes it is merely a lyrical fragment, a curse or a blessing, a prayer or a lament. At other times it is a long and carefully elaborated literary production, an ode of victory or a threnody, a description of the tribes of Israel or a prophecy. Such poetic insertions are lacking only in the romances of Ruth and Esther and the memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah. In the historical books there may be many more than have yet been recognized. Notably in the early chapters of Genesis some fragments may have lost, through carelessness in the transmission of the text, the distinguishing marks of rhythm and metric structure. The Massorites observed the poetic character of many of these songs, and they have sometimes been indicated as poems in manuscripts and printed texts. In other instances, however, the songs were written in continuous lines as prose and suffered from the

hands of copyists, who were not aware of their real nature. A few additions might undoubtedly be made to the present collection, but it contains all that may be naturally expected. Since the Psalter has been treated in another volume of this series, a late psalm ascribed to David in 2 Sam. 22, taken over from some Davidic collection, and preserved also in Ps. 18, and a psalm likewise ascribed to David in 1 Chron. 16 : 8–36, pieced together by an interpolator from Pss. 96, 105, and 106, have been left out.

### 2. *The Origin of the Poems*

Those who recited the mighty deeds of Yahwe at festivals or other public gatherings were probably in the first place prophets and prophetesses. The inspired seers uttered oracles, pronounced curses and blessings, chanted pæans of victory, lamented the dead, and sang songs of derision. Folk-songs may live on the lips of the people, being preserved in faithful memory from generation to generation; but they do not spring from the lips of the common people. Even the simplest art must be learned, and though the names of the artists may be forgotten, they were men and women, rising in their day above the ordinary level of intelligence and skill. It was apparently at the great annual festival in the spring that Deborah, the seeress, chanted her ode of victory in the presence of the princes of Israel. In the same manner many another

song may have first been introduced at some sanctuary. Reciters of well-known songs, like those of the conquest, may have appeared not only at local shrines but also at camping-places. Gradually there grew up collections of songs, after the art of writing had been introduced, such as the Book of Songs and the Book of the Brave, which we know to have existed in the time of Solomon. Even in telling the stories of the heroes, it is likely that skilled narrators, before the development of a prose style, naturally fell into a semi-poetic strain, and it is not impossible that parallelisms and measured length of lines now and then met with in the Judæan and Ephraimitish chronicles go back to this early custom.

### 3. *Their Insertion in the Present Text*

To the first historical writers these snatches of song were of priceless value. They gathered them where they could find them, and particularly drew on the extant collections. Occasionally there would be a reference to the author or the event celebrated by way of a preface. In other cases the contents spoke unmistakably of the situation the poet had in mind. Often it was natural to suppose that the song was originally sung by some famous person of the period referred to. Not infrequently, however, a slight suggestion would be sufficient to turn the historian's thought to a certain event. In any case, the

song served at once as text and illustration. It furnished material and it enlivened the narrative. It had the value of a document substantiating an important statement of fact, and it imparted to the story a certain dignity and a much-affected elevation of style. Though it cannot be proved, it is altogether probable that, not only the first historical writers in Judah and Israel, but already the popular reciters at the shrines whose stories they recorded, thus enriched their narratives with occasional poems. In a measure it is perhaps possible to determine whether a song originated in the Negeb, in Judah, or in Israel, and hence whether, in all probability, it was incorporated in one or the other of the earliest story books that lie at the foundation of our Pentateuch. But this, after all, can only be of secondary value. The later historians, as a matter of course, followed the traditional estimate, and adhering to the same principles, added other songs.

### 4. *The Authorship of the Poems*

A number of the songs are not ascribed in the text to any author. Such are the Song of the Tower of Babel, the Dirge of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Song of the Ark, the Song of the Crossing of Arnon, the Song of the Taking of Be'er, and the Song of the Conquests of Sihon. Four at least may with some assurance be assigned to the traditional authors. These are the Song of Deborah, the Elegy

of David over Saul and Jonathan, the Elegy of David over Abner, and the Words of Solomon at the Dedication of the Temple. In the exposition following the translation of each of the other songs the reasons will be briefly suggested why they cannot be regarded as having come from the authors to whom they are ascribed in the text. The names of the real authors are not known, but they have often revealed in a striking manner their personality in their poems.

### 5. *Their Date*

The Song of Deborah is generally regarded by critics as the earliest literary document in Israel. Frequent repetition has possibly made the statement to this effect appear more certain than in reality it is. A more searching textual and historical criticism will scarcely permit any longer the ascription of the songs dealing with the conquest of the East Jordan country to the period of the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, but renders it probable that they go back to the time of the invasion. The song celebrating the battle of Gibeon is probably also older than the Song of Deborah, and the Sodom and Gomorrah dirge may antedate the famous ode. The Song of Lamech and the Curse and Blessing of Noah are manifestly much earlier than David's time. Beside the genuine poems of David and Solomon, several of the longest productions in this collection, such as the Blessings of Isaac, the Blessing of

Jacob, and the Prophecies of Balaam seem to come from the period of the United Kingdom. The Blessing of Moses apparently dates from the ninth century. The Taunt-Song on Sennacherib and the oracle against this Assyrian king no doubt originated in the time of Isaiah, even if they cannot have come from him; and the Song of the Exodus, the Song of Moses, the Curse of Jericho, and the Last Words of David may still be pre-exilic. Only the Song of Hanna and the Song of Youth and Age in Ecclesiastes are clearly productions of the Greek period. While none of these poems can be dated with absolute certainty, there can be little doubt that, with a few exceptions, they are older than the rest of extant Hebrew poetry.

### 6. *Their Historic Value*

The modern historian may not be able to use them with the implicit faith of the early historical writers in Israel as documentary material. As he cannot affirm concerning any of them that it was written in such and such a year, so he cannot declare that it gives unimpeachable testimony as to the occurrence of this or that event. The Song of the Tower, though very old, can no more vouch for the confusion of tongues at Babylon, than the Song of the Exodus, which is very young, can testify to the miracle of the Red Sea. The Blessing of Moses and the Prophecies of Balaam throw as little light on the period of the invasion

as the Blessings of Isaac and the Blessing of Jacob on the patriarchal age. Not a single date in the history of Israel could be fixed by these songs. They do not help us to determine, with any degree of accuracy, when Arnon was crossed, or Be'er taken, or Heshbon rebuilt, or when the battles were fought at Gibeon, by the river Kishon, or on Gilboa's mountains.

On the other hand, historical research is not deterred to-day by the admixture of miraculous elements from acknowledging a nucleus of fact. The drying up of perennial streams, the standing still of sun and moon, the fighting of stars from their courses do not prevent the recognition of three important events in the early history of Israel. In the light of recent discoveries the situation presented in the Song of the Conquests of Sihon is as plausible as that in the Song of Deborah. When the descriptions of the various tribes in the Song of Deborah, the Blessing of Jacob, and the Blessing of Moses are compared, certain facts of historic development stand out so clearly that they would be surmised even if there were no other literary documents to indicate them. It is only necessary to think of Simeon and Levi, Judah and Ephraim, Reuben and Benjamin. The whole story of the absorption of tribes, the growth of a priestly caste, the development of rival kingdoms is suggested in these songs. David's lament gives, indeed, contemporaneous testimony to the death of Saul and Jonathan, and the Taunt-Song on Sennacherib

would not have lived on the lips of the people if Jerusalem had not escaped the sack it feared. The chief historic importance, however, lies in the light the poems shed on the unfolding of Israel's social life, its customs, ideas, and sentiments.

### 7. *Their Ethical and Religious Significance*

Since the bulk of these poems existed long before the great pre-exilic prophets, the psalmists, and the wisdom-teachers had appeared, they are especially valuable as affording some knowledge concerning the moral sentiments and religious conceptions prevalent in earlier times. The value of these ideas and ideals has been estimated in the General Introduction, and will often be touched upon in the exposition of the songs. It may be added that, in spite of the great variety of sentiment expressed, and the marked individuality of the poets, certain lines of development may be observed within this collection. The fierce sense of tribal justice, voicing itself in the Song of Lamech, the Curse of Noah, the Dirge of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Song of Deborah, has manifestly given place to some extent in the Davidic age to more humane feelings of enlightened patriotism in the Prophecies of Balaam, an almost apologetic imperialism in the Blessings of Isaac, and a nascent cosmopolitanism in the Song of the Tower. The rare capacity for generous judgment and whole-hearted

friendship which the elegy over Saul and Jonathan evinces is no doubt a personal quality; but a David living a few centuries later, when the Song of Moses was written, would have had a deeper consciousness of sin, and sought the worth of a human personality in other qualities than those the great king praised. Similarly, the Song of the Tower, the Dirge of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Command to the Sun and the Moon, the Song of Deborah, and Solomon's Temple Dedication reveal a still flourishing polytheism, and the Song of the Ark, the Oracle of the Fire, and, to some degree, the Priestly Benediction, show very primitive ideas connected with the cult, while the Song of Moses, the Taunt-Song on Sennacherib, the Song of the Exodus, and the Song of Hanna indicate the advance of Hebrew religion toward monotheism and a more spiritual worship. Too much stress, however, must not be laid on this progress. Neither in the series of songs here collected from the Hebrew Bible, nor in the books that make up the Hebrew canon, is it possible to maintain that that which is later is necessarily higher, judged from a moral and religious stand-point. There was an evolution of morality and religion in ancient Israel, but our fragmentary records do not permit us to follow its growth. We catch glimpses now and then of the scenery along the road, but we can never be sure that we have seen the best. There can, of course, be no question of emulating the example of heroes praised in these songs, unless it seems to us good, or cherish-

ing such moral sentiments as are expressed in them, unless our conscience approves, or accepting the religious ideas set forth, unless they appear to us to be true. When read with proper historic judgment, and with an earnest desire to enter sympathetically into the lives of the poets and into the events that stirred them, these poems cannot fail to be spiritually helpful.

## II

### THE SONG OF LAMECH
(Gen. 4 : 23, 24)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Lamech declares his exacting standard of blood-revenge (Gen. 4 : 23, 24)

Adah and Zillah,
O listen to me!
Ye wives of Lamech,
Give ear to my voice:

For a man I slay,
If a wound I get,
And a youth I kill,
If I am but bruised.

If vengeance for Cain,
Is wreaked sevenfold,
Lamech is avenged
Seventy times and seven.

### 2. *The Exposition*

The Kenites are favorably known for the strictness with which they enforce the law of blood-revenge. If one life is taken from this tribe, seven lives are demanded from the offending tribe to atone for it. But the Lamechites are even more exacting. They take seventy-seven lives for one, and kill a man for a wound. Of the names mentioned in the song, Cain, or Qayin, is that of the Kenite tribe inhabitating the eastern part of the Negeb near the Arabah and the southern end of the Dead Sea. Here they had cities in the days of David (1 Sam. 30 : 29). In earlier times they had been nomads, invading the steppe-land, probably from Mount Seir. Later, their cities were taken away from them and they became again nomads in the Negeb. This roaming life seemed to many a city dweller a curse, which must have been caused by their crimes, and the story was told of their cruel treatment of a lost brother-tribe, Abel. They were Yahwe worshippers, however, and bore in their bodies the Yahwe sign, probably circumcision; therefore they were not without divine protection, though they had no sanctuaries in the cultivated land, and Yahwe would not allow any one to attack them with impunity. The Jerahmeelites were the western neighbors of the Kenites. They also had cities, the finest in the Negeb. It is possible that the Lamech tribe belonged to the Jerahmeelites. Tubal-Cain is the Tubal clan among

the Kenites, as the Ma'inu-Mizran are the Minæans living in what was regarded as territory belonging to Egypt, and has nothing to do with the Tubal in Asia Minór. It is probably of Edomitish origin, as Tubal-Cain's "sister" Naamah is the Edomitish clan whence Zophar in the Book of Job comes. Adah and Zillah are no doubt also clan names, otherwise unknown. Since Tubal-Cain, and not Lamech, is represented in the genealogical legend as the ancestor of those who work in brass and iron, the poet certainly did not think of Lamech as flourishing unusual weapons, fresh from the forge, when addressing his wives; and nothing could be further from his thought than to stigmatize bigamy as an evil. None of the Jewish law-codes regards bigamy as a crime. The song is probably earlier than David's time, and has been preserved in a story book of Judæan origin. It has been pointed out by Budde that this book cannot, at the time when the story of Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-Cain was written, have contained any reference to the deluge.

## III

### THE CURSE AND BLESSINGS OF NOAH
(Gen. 9 : 25, 26)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Canaan be cursed, a slave of slaves
To his own brothers let him be!

Bless, O Yahwe, the tents of Shem,
Let Canaan be to him a slave!

Let God to Japhet give wide space,
And let him dwell in Canaan's tents!

May Canaan be forever the slave of his brethren; may they grow great! (Gen. 9 : 25, 26)

#### 2. *The Notes*

We should probably read "bless" as an imperative, and not "blessed," "tents" (*'oholê*) and not "God" (*'elohê*), and in verse 26 "Canaan," not "Shem." It is perfectly evident that the singer cannot desire Japhet to take possession of Shem's tents. The word for "dwell" does not mean "be a guest."

#### 3. *The Exposition*

Canaan, Shem, and Japhet are represented as brothers and sons of Noah. Canaan is cursed, Shem is blessed, and the wish is expressed that Japhet may grow at Canaan's

expense. Canaan is, of course, the name of the Canaanites, including the Phœnicians. Shem, as the special object of Yahwe's care, has been generally supposed to be Israel. It is possible, however, that already in this song it is the name of a somewhat larger congeries of tribes, conscious of a closer kinship, including, besides Israel, many of the tribes of Judah, the Negeb, Edom, and the East Jordan country. Japhet is probably a similar name including some tribes, like the Cretans, the Pelethites, the Zakkalians, and the Philistines. In spite of their well-known differences, they are regarded as brothers because of their common speech and their neighborly relations in a common country. The Hebrews, coming from Arabia Petræa, had adopted the speech of Canaan, and so had, no doubt, the Philistines, coming from Crete, as the place-names on the coast and in the Negeb seem to indicate. The earlier possessors of the land, the Canaanites, had naturally become the common enemy of the invaders. Let Canaan be robbed of his land, subjugated and enslaved! May the Philistines take the Phœnician cities on the coast! The situation seems to be that of the twelfth century B. C., after the battle of the Kishon, and before the hostile invasion of the interior by the Philistines. The song is not concerned about the motives; it is the later prose story preceding it in the present text that seeks to justify the enslavement of Canaan by his crimes, particularly the practice of sodomy. The names of two of the brothers subsequently acquired a

wider meaning so that Shem came to include Arabs, Aramæans, Assyrians, Arrapachæans, Chaldæans, and also Elamites and Lydians, while Japhet was made to include a number of nations in Asia Minor, Greece, the islands and western coast lands of the Mediterranean, as different as Carthaginians, Ionians, and Scythians. The name of Canaan was too closely attached to the land of Canaan to allow a similar expansion, and Ham was used to designate the larger family made up of Egyptians, Libyans, Ethiopians, and Canaanites.

## IV

### THE SONG OF THE TOWER
(Gen. 11 : 3, 4, 6, 7)

#### 1. *The Translation.*

"O lend a hand, let us make brick,
And bake them till they all are hard;
And let the brick serve us for stone,
For mortar let us use the mud.

The people speak: Let us make an abundance of brick (Gen. 11 : 3)

"O come, let us a city build,
Whose tower shall reach unto the sky.
Let us set up a landmark here,
Lest we be scattered o'er the earth."

And build a tower of surpassing height (11 : 4)

The gods speak: Lo! this united people will be ambitious (11 : 6)

"Behold, one people with one speech!
This is what they begin to do.
Soon naught will be too hard for them
That enters in their mind to do.

Let us confuse their speech (11 : 7)

"Come, to this place let us go down,
And there the speech of all confound,
So that no man shall understand
The language that his neighbor speaks."

### 2. *The Exposition*

In the first and second stanzas the builders speak, in the third and fourth, the gods. The city and the tower are to be built of brick, and the tower is to be so high that it may serve as a landmark and prevent the people from being scattered over the earth. Even without the context it would be clear that this song refers to a Babylonian city and its *zikkurat*, or temple-tower. The Hebrew poet who adopted the legend of the tower, whose top was to reach to the sky, no doubt understood the city to be Babylon. In heaven there is a council of the gods. Attention is called to the fact that all men have the same language so that they can easily communicate one with another. As long as this is the case, they will continue to plan such dangerous schemes. This is only the beginning of their proud and heaven-defying enterprises. Nothing will be too hard for them if they are united. This union is dangerous to the

supremacy of the gods. If the tower is allowed to reach heaven, men will ascend to the very abode of the gods. Hence the gods, jealous of man's growing powers, decide that they will go down and confound the speech of all, so that no one shall be able to understand what his neighbor says. No legend of this kind has yet been found in Babylonian literature, yet the elements out of which it grew were Babylonian. Babylon itself is clearly the city built of brick by primeval men, the old Marduk temple with its *zikkurat*, probably the structure especially referred to, the great capital with its cosmopolitan population, where Shumerians, Akkadians, Amorites, Kashites, Chaldæans, Aramæans, Arabs, Elamites, and Hittites lived, more likely than any other to be the place where the confusion of tongues was supposed to have occurred. It is not necessary to infer from the polytheistic setting that the myth originated in Babylonia. That the gods held their councils was known in Syria as well. The singer may have been a Hebrew who at some time had visited Babylon, seen its great temple with its tower, tried in vain to make himself understood in its streets, experienced what the power of Babylon meant, and learned to see in the curse of unintelligible languages dividing mankind a blessing in disguise, as it prevented men from encroaching upon the domains of the gods in heaven, and from other deeds of arrogance and wickedness. The naïve idea that heaven might be reached by adding new stages to a temple-tower, the con-

ception of the anxiety of the gods on account of this enterprise, and the notion of their jealousy of man's power unmistakably point to a very early time, and the preservation of the pantheon itself indicates that the text was relatively fixed before the monotheistic tendency had affected it. On the other hand, the sense of the divisive influence of the difference of speech, and of its tendency to frustrate common undertakings, seems to reveal more advanced reflection. It is not possible, however, to determine how early such a feeling may have arisen, and the attempt to build a world-empire with its power centralized in Babylon, coming to an end by the intervention of the gods, appears to have been a recent memory. As the frank polytheism of the song forbids the assumption that it could have been written after the end of the Chaldæan empire, it may go back to a period when the earlier Babylonian empire could still be remembered.

## V

### THE SONG OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH
(Gen. 18 : 20 f.; 19 : 24 f.)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Because of their extreme wickedness, God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire from heaven (Gen. 18 : 20 f.; 19 : 24 f.)

The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah 's great
That very grievous is their wickedness.
I will go down and see whether the cry
Coming to me is true, or know, if not.

On Sodom and Gomorrah Yahwe rained;
Brimstone and fire from out of heaven came.
Cities and region he did overthrow,
Fruit of the ground and dwellers in the towns.

#### 2. *The Exposition*

A complaint has reached heaven that there is much wickedness in Sodom and Gomorrah. In order to find out whether it is true, Yahwe goes down. Discovering the truth, he rains down brimstone and fire from heaven on the guilty cities, and destroys the whole region. It may be doubted whether this was originally conceived of as the deed of Yahwe. Even in the prose story there are three divine beings taking part in these events. But that the god comes down from heaven may not be urged against Yahwe's participation. A divinity whose element is the

storm-cloud may well descend from heaven and send his fire and brimstone thence. It seems to have been supposed that the Dead Sea once was a rich and fruitful region with flourishing cities. The abnormal condition of this sea in which nothing lives, and on whose shores nothing thrives, so different from the lovely lake of Galilee, appeared to proclaim that it was under a curse. A curse comes because of some great transgression, and the transgressors were the people of the region. Once it had been a veritable garden of Eden, like the land of Egypt. But swift destruction came, the cities were overthrown, and the people killed, the fruits of the ground destroyed, and the whole territory made what it has been ever since. The catastrophe came, not by volcanic forces from below, but through fire and brimstone hurled from heaven. There is not the slightest intimation in the song or in the prose account of any subterranean or terrestrial agents. From the geologic period when the Dead Sea was formed, no records, memories, or traditions had come down to the poet's time. It is in folk-psychology and mythology, not in the facts revealed by modern natural science, the origin of the story must be sought. We do not know how old the names Jebel Usdum and Wadi Ghumran are. No city could ever have stood in either place. There have indeed been many communities on the shores of the Dead Sea, and some abandoned places may have borne the names Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim. The story attached itself to these names.

## VI

### THE ORACLE OF JACOB AND ESAU
(Gen. 25 : 23)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Two nations are within thy womb,
Two peoples from thy bowels come.
One people shall the other rule,
The elder shall the younger serve.

Of thy children the younger shall rule the older (Gen. 25: 23)

#### 2. *The Exposition*

Jacob and Esau are two nations: Israel and Edom. They are kindred and have a common origin. An oracle is put upon the lips of their putative mother in which she foretells their future. The younger people is Israel, but it will rule over the older, Edom. Before David, Edom was independent, having its own kings when there were no kings over Israel. A precious list of these kings has been preserved in Gen. 36, covering the period from about 1200 B. C. to 1050 B. C. In the time of David and Solomon, Edom was ruled from Jerusalem. Then it was known that the older was destined to serve the younger; and then this oracle was produced to justify, by the divine intention from the beginning, the ruthless destruction of Edomitish independence.

## VII

### ISAAC'S BLESSING OF JACOB
(Gen. 27 : 27–29)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Let Jacob be blessed with abundance of corn and wine; let him be supreme over brethren and peoples (Gen. 27 : 27–29)

My son smells with the odor
Of field that Yahwe blesses.

Of heaven's dew let him give thee,
Of corn and wine in plenty.

Let nations be thy servants,
And peoples bow before thee.

Be lord over thy brothers,
Thy mother's sons bow to thee.

Who curses thee be cursed,
Who blesses thee be blessed.

#### 2. *The Exposition*

Israel is blessed by Yahwe with corn and wine, and is destined to rule over the brother-nations, Edom, Moab, and Ammon. This is the condition in the time of David and Solomon, and an oracle describing this is put upon the lips of the putative ancestor in order to show that it had been

the purpose of Yahwe from the beginning. In the genealogical epos, Isaac, the benignantly smiling numen of Beersheba, became the father of Jacob; and the curious reversal in the fortunes of the two brother-nations, Israel and Edom, was explained by the cleverness with which Israel cheated his father and secured the blessing whose power is such that it works out infallibly the divinely intended destiny.

The character of the blessing is interesting. In suggestive phrases it promises great agricultural prosperity, such as the other nations could not enjoy so completely, and adds a prediction of wide-ranging supremacy and of significant pre-eminence. It is clear that no picture like this could have occurred to an Israelitish poet earlier than the days of David.

## VIII

### ISAAC'S BLESSING OF ESAU

(Gen. 27 : 39, 40)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Barrenness of land and servitude shall be thy lot, but at last thou shalt free thyself (Gen. 27 : 39, 40)

Far from the rich earth thou shalt dwell,
Far from the dew that falls from heaven.

Thou by thy sword shalt have to live,
And to thy brother be a slave.

But when at length thou shalt break loose,
Thou shalt shake from thy neck his yoke.

### 2. *The Exposition*

The destiny of Edom is to live in a mountain region where there is no rich soil from which to draw sustenance. Dependent on the sword, the nation will temporarily become subject to Israel. But it will break loose and shake off the yoke. This successful revolution probably took place toward the end of Solomon's reign. For a long period Edom was independent until Amaziah again subdued it. The oracle is likely to have been produced in the second half of the tenth century, when the insurrection was still fresh in mind, and the conditions in Judah rendered it improbable that Edom could again be brought into subjection. There is a certain commingling of pity and respect in this oracle. The older son was, after all, the father's favorite, and he could not help giving him also a blessing.

## IX

### THE BLESSING OF JACOB

(Gen. 49 : 3–27)

### 1. *The Translation.*

Reuben, the first-born, shall lose his pre-eminence because of his violent, passionate character (Gen. 49 : 3, 4)

O Reuben, thou my first-born art,
The first-fruits of my manly strength.

In passion first, in violence first,
A bubbling stream, shalt not be first.

Thy father's bed thou didst ascend,
And thy sire's couch thou didst defile.

Simeon and Levi brothers are,
Weapons of violence are their swords.

Simeon and Levi shall be dispersed in Israel because of their self-willed turbulence and cruelty (49 : 5–7)

My soul, with them no council hold,
My glory, shun their fellowship.

For in their wrath they slew a man,
In their self-will they houghed an ox.

Cursed be their fury, it was fierce,
Their anger, for it cruel was.

In Jacob I will scatter them,
And them in Israel divide.

Judah, thy brothers all praise thee,
Before thee bow thy father's sons.

Judah, praised by all, strong, bold, prosperous, shall rule until nations pay homage to him (49 : 8–12)

Thou, Judah, art a lion's whelp;
By prey, my son, thou hast grown great.

He couches as a lion, stoops
As lioness. Who dares rouse him?

From Judah not the sceptre turns,
Nor from his feet the ruler's staff

Till that comes which belongs to him,
And nations to him homage pay.

He fastens to the vine his ass,
To the choice vine his ass's foal.

His garment he in wine does wash,
His raiment in the blood of grapes.

His eyes are bright as sparkling wine,
His teeth are whiter than the milk.

Zebulon shall be a sea dweller (49 : 13)

Beside the sea dwells Zebulon,
Where havens are for ships he lies,
And he his back on Sidon turns.

Issachar, for the sake of ease, shall be content to serve (49 : 14, 15)

A strong ass Issachar is,
Between the folds he couches.

He saw how fine his place was,
How very fair the land was.

His back he bent for burdens,
A slave became to task-work.

Dan shall be wise and clever in caring for himself (49 : 16, 17)

Dan judges his own people,
As any tribe in Israel.

Dan's on the road a serpent,
An adder in the pathway;

He bites the heels of horses,
And backward fall the riders.

Gad is oppressed by robbers,
Yet he shall press on their heel.

Gad will drive away his foes (49 : 19)

Asher, how fat his bread is!
He shall yield royal dainties.

Asher shall live well (49 : 20)

Naphtali is a loose hind,
And lovely fawns she brings forth.

Naphtali will be populous (49 : 21)

A bullock is Joseph, a steer,
The calf of a wild bull, my son.

Joseph will be fiercely attacked, but will overcome his enemies (49 : 22–24)

They grieved him and sent him their shots,
The archers pursued him with force.

Yet crushed was forever their bow,
And the strength of their hands gave out,

Through the power of Jacob's Bull,
The Shepherd of Israel's sons.

(Thy father's God, may he help thee,
El Shaddai, may he bless thee

May God grant him every kind of blessing! (49 : 25, 26)

With blessings from heaven above,
And blessings from regions below,

With blessings of breasts and of womb,
And blessings of father and child,

With blessings of primeval mounts,
And treasures of eternal hills.)

(On Joseph's head may these things come,
Among all his brothers the prince.)

Benjamin shall be a taker of spoil (49 : 27)

Benjamin is a wolf that tears,
In the morning his prey devours,
In the evening his spoil divides.

### 2. *The Notes*

In 49 : 10 we should read with the Greek version, not Shiloh, but *asher lo*, later changed to *sheloh*, "that which belongs to him," as was seen by Wellhausen. Jacob is used as a synonym of Israel. It is possible that it was first introduced in the time of David and Solomon, as a name for the larger unity of the Israelitish and Judahite tribes. In verse 11 *'imere* means "fawns"; the beautiful distich speaks throughout of Naphtali as a "hind." The twelfth verse represents Joseph as a calf of a wild bull; there is no other simile; neither "fountain" nor "wall" was thought of by the author. Read *shor*, and remove the dittographs. The Greek version has preserved the only possible sense in 14a. The archers were unsuccessful; their bow was always

crushed; the strength of their hands gave out; not "the arms of his hands," for the young bullock does not shoot with arrows, and has no hands, least of all hands that have arms. Why the modern versions should perpetuate such arrant nonsense passes understanding. "From there" should not be changed to "from the name," in verse 15, but stricken out, as the metre requires. For *eben* read *bene*. The helper is not "the name of the shepherd of the stone of Israel," whatever the shepherd of a stone may be, but "the shepherd of the sons of Israel," thought of as a herd. The original oracle on Joseph probably ended with v. 23. The blessing uses the second person and a name of God which was supposed to belong properly to Jacob's time. "On Joseph's head may these things come, Among all his brothers the prince" looks like a still later addition. The oracles on Zebulon and Benjamin are tristichs; especially the shorter oracles show a variety of metre, contrasting with the uniform metre in the Song of Deborah. The first collection of these oracles may have been introduced simply by the words: "Israel sang."

### 3. *The Exposition*

The dying Jacob is represented as foretelling the future of his sons. It is evident, however, that twelve individuals are not addressed. A father could not very well say that he would scatter two of his sons in himself. Judah, the

son of the nomad, is not a king. Zebulon is not a man who lies on the ground with his face turned away from the city of Sidon. If Dan can judge his people as well as any tribe in Israel, he must have a people, there must be tribes, and there must be an Israel that is something else than a dying man. The descriptions of the tribes evidently came from different times. Some of them, like those on Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Zebulon, Issachar, Dan, Gad, and Naphtali may have originated before Saul; that on Benjamin probably comes from the time of this king; that on Judah, from the reign of David. The oracle on Joseph would have to be assigned to the period of the Israelitish kingdom after Jeroboam, if the last distich must be regarded as genuine. If it is removed, there is no reason why the archers should not refer to the nomadic invaders in the period before the Philistine conquest and Saul. Yet this must be left in doubt.

Reuben is regarded as the oldest of the tribes. He has lost his pre-eminent position. Evidently he has been reduced by the Moabitish neighbors. A reason is sought for this change in relative importance among the kindred tribes, and found in his passionate and violent character. Especially worthy of rebuke is the custom prevailing in this tribe of taking possession of a father's concubines, possibly of using them already in his lifetime. Hence the allusion to Bilhah. Simeon and Levi are treated together as turbulent, cruel, and self-willed tribes which therefore

have been scattered in Israel. The Simeonite cities in the Negeb had manifestly passed into the hands of the Jerahmeelites at the time this oracle was produced. In the days of David they were Jerahmeelite; later they became a part of Judah. The Levites, having once their homes south of the Simeonites, with Kadesh Barnea for their centre, likewise had been scattered and absorbed; but they had not yet become a priestly tribe or a name for those who devoted themselves to the priesthood. This dissolution of two originally important tribes must be explained, and there is an allusion to their united enterprise in avenging Dinah. Whether the story was, at the outset, laid in Shechem, may be questioned. Significant is the disavowal by Jacob of any responsibility for such acts. Judah, praised by the others, is rich in milk and wine and is powerful. The kingdom belongs to this tribe, and the royal sceptre will not be turned away from it until nations pay homage to it. That is consequently what had taken place when the oracle was written, and the nations, therefore, are the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Edomites, subdued by David. The saying concerning Zebulon is a tristich from a different source, not a prediction, but a characterization. Its territory is east and south of Sidon, and includes some ports on the Mediterranean. In still a different metre is the oracle on Issachar, referring to the effeminating influence upon a tribe once very strong, of the fine land it had secured which finally made it subject to

mightier neighbors forcing its people to slave-service. This change evidently took place after the battle of Kishon, described in the Song of Deborah, and the establishment of Saul's and David's kingdoms. Dan can take care of itself as well as any tribe. It is skilled in making raids on travellers. This is mentioned with no disapproval such as that expressed in the case of Simeon and Levi. As there is no allusion to its new site at the fountains of the Jordan, it is probably earlier than the Song of Deborah, and even the removal before the war against Sisera from its home on the borders of Philistia. Gad's future is to be brighter than its past. Ammonites, Moabites, Midianites, Minæans have been crowding in upon him; but his turn will come and he will drive them away. This he has done when the saying was coined. The final deliverance came through Saul and David. Asher probably yielded no dainties for the royal table before David or Solomon required them. Naphtali is a somewhat wild hind, but it is fruitful and its growing communities are fine. Joseph, that is Ephraim and Manasse conceived as a unit, is a wild young bullock pursued by archers. But the enemies of this tribe have not been successful. It has escaped all attacks through the strength of Jacob's Bull, the god, who has watched over it as a shepherd over the herd. Its land is rich and its population growing. If the last distich is genuine, Jeroboam's kingdom is presupposed. But it may have been added in the tenth century. In that case conditions obtain-

ing in the latter part of the period of the judges are depicted. Among the divine names Yahwe does not occur. He may be indicated, however, by the title "Bull of Jacob," as we know that he was worshipped in Bethel as well as Dan under the form of a bull. El Shaddai is used as an appropriate archaism in the added benediction. The description, in a tristich, of Benjamin is either older than the catastrophe described in the appendix to the Book of Judges, or more probably later, coming from the time of Saul.

Zimmern and others have endeavored to show that the twelve tribes are described in a manner suggesting the twelve signs of the zodiac. In the case of Reuben, Zebulon, Gad, and Asher there certainly is nothing to justify this assumption. Ass, serpent, hind, and wolf are not zodiacal signs; and there is no evidence that the zodiac was known in Israel when these oracles were written.

### 4. *The Historical and Religious Value of the Poem*

A close inspection of this poem shows that it was one of the compositions that were popular in Israel, reflecting the conditions of the Israel of the early kingdom, when the nation was becoming unified and was realizing its strength and indulging in hopes of a brilliant future. It was frankly ascribed to the dying Jacob, as a sort of pre-view of the

history of the nation. Crude and frank as many of its expressions are, the poem breathes a loyalty to the nationality and to Yahwe which stirs the reader's blood.

## X

### THE SONG OF MOSES
(Ex. 15 : 1–18)

#### 1. *The Translation*

I praise Yahwe who hath given us a glorious deliverance (Ex. 15 : 1–7)

I sing to Yahwe; he has triumphed.
He threw in the sea horse and rider.
Yahwe is my strength, brought deliverance.
The God of my fathers I praise.

A warrior, Yahwe is his name,
The chariots of Pharaoh threw down,
His captains sank in the Red Sea,
Like a stone they went down in the deep.

Thy right hand is glorious in power,
Thy right hand, Yahwe, smote the foe,
Thy pride threw the enemy prostrate,
Like stubble thy anger consumed them.

In the sea he caused our foes to drown (15 : 8–10)

At thy breath the waters rose up,
And the floods stood upright like a heap.

Said the foe: "I will follow, will reach,
Will draw sword, and my hand shall destroy."

Thou blewest thy wind, they were covered,
And they sank in the waters like lead.
Among gods who is like thee, O Yahwe?
Who is glorious and holy as thou?

All our enemies are seized with fear (15 : 11–16)

At thy bidding earth swallowed them up,
The redeemed ones in mercy were led
To thy holy place, where thou didst guide them.
Peoples heard it, and troubled were they.

Those who dwelt in Philistia trembled;
In Edom the dukes were amazed;
Terror seized on the nobles of Moab;
All the dwellers in Canaan were scared.

A horrible fear fell upon them,
Thy arm made them still as a stone,
Till thy people, O Yahwe, passed on,
Till thy people, redeemed, passed them by.

Oh, bring us to our inheritance! (15 : 17)

In a mountain of thine thou wilt plant them,
The place thou hast made to dwell in it,
The temple prepared by thine own hands.
There forever Yahwe shall be king.

### 2. *The Exposition*

The references to Yahwe's mountain, whether Zion or the land, and to Yahwe's temple, render it impossible to suppose that this psalm was sung before the time of Solomon. Equally out of harmony with the conditions prevailing at the time of the Hebrew invasion are the allusions to the Philistines, the Moabites, and the Edomites. The Philistines, coming from Crete, settled on the coast after the Israelitish tribes had invaded Syria. If the crossing of the Red Sea seemed an imminent danger to the people of the West Jordan country, only a preternatural foresight of the events of the reign of David could have inspired Edom with fear of the consequences. Had the Edomite dukes known that David would subdue one of their kings centuries later, they would also have known that their territory would not be invaded, but circumvented, forty years after the exodus. Moab had been conquered by the Amoritish king, Sihon, and might well have looked hopefully for help from their kinsmen. It is the fate that actually befell these nations through David and Solomon that is reflected in the song. A later time could see that all this was implied in the deliverance wrought by Yahwe at the Red Sea. The *yam suph*, Sea of Sedges, or Sea of Suph, was probably understood by the poet as the Heroopolitan Gulf. He knows the story, in an advanced form, of how the waters of the Red Sea stood up like walls

on both sides, while the people passed through, and how the Egyptians sank in the deep like stones. Before the scene was transferred to Egypt, tradition may have preserved the memory of a fortunate escape by some ethnic elements, afterward entering into the composition of the Bene Israel, across the northern end of the Aelanitic Gulf, through a wind temporarily laying bare the bottom near a place called Suph. While the song is certainly later than the fourth year of Solomon's reign, there seems to be no necessity for supposing it to be post-exilic. The question, "Who is like unto thee, O Yahwe, among the gods?" may not be decisive for an earlier date; but the comparison is too enthusiastic, the polytheism too frank and naïve for a literary reminiscence, as it is in the Psalter.

## XI

### THE SONG OF MIRIAM
(Ex. 15 : 21)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Sing ye to Yahwe, for triumphed he has;
The horse and its rider he threw in the sea.

#### 2. *The Exposition*

The Song of Miriam is only a repetition of the first two lines, with the change of one word, of the Song of Moses.

There is no reason for supposing that it is more original than the longer chant. It may be a precious indication, however, that women were permitted to participate, by song and dance, in the celebration of victories.

## XII

### THE ORACLE OF THE ALTAR FIRE
(Lev. 10 : 3)

#### 1. *The Translation*

I will be sanctified on those near me,
And before all the people glorified.

#### 2. *The Exposition*

Strange fire has been offered on the altar by Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu. Fire comes forth from the face of Yahwe and consumes them so that they die. This gives Moses occasion to announce an oracle from Yahwe. By this catastrophe he has revealed himself as the Holy One, who will not permit the use on his altar of any other fire than that which he has himself sent down, and which therefore must be kept up continually. His glory has been seen in the death of the priests. It is impossible not to think of the two sons of Jeroboam, Nadab and Abihu, and of the rivalry between the priestly families of the royal sanctuary

in Jerusalem, and those at the older shrines in Bethel and Dan. The former will not deny a legitimate origin to the latter, but they claim to be in sole possession of the fire that came from Yahwe. It was the boast of the priesthood at Dan that they descended from a grandson of Moses. The Elidæ at Shiloh had regarded themselves as descendants of Aaron; and similar claims no doubt were made by the priests at other sanctuaries. But the battle-ground was shifted to the character of the altar-fire. This oracle was probably produced after the fall of Samaria, in 723 B. C., at a time when the Yahwe cult had ceased, or at any rate, the priestly families no longer officiated at the temples of Israel. It had all been foreseen from the beginning.

## XIII

### THE PRIESTLY BENEDICTION
(Num. 6 : 24–26)

#### 1. *The Translation*

May Yahwe bless thee, may he keep thee!
May Yahwe's face in grace shine on thee!
May Yahwe lift his countenance on thee!
And may he grant his peace to thee!

### 2. *The Exposition*

This beautiful benediction was probably pronounced by the priests of Yahwe long before there was a high-priest. In the larger sanctuaries there was no doubt a graduation of the priesthood, and the benediction may have been uttered by its oldest or most distinguished member. But only in post-exilic times was there a high-priest, who was the official representative of the religious life of the nation and of the state itself. The emphasis on the face of Yahwe possibly indicates a higher age. In the cult, the worshipper in earlier times saw the face of the god on whom he called; and it was his chief joy, it gave assurance that his requests had been granted, if the face of the deity gave the impression of smiling graciously upon him. In the case of a solar, lunar, or astral deity, images could be dispensed with, and dependence was had upon the apparently added lustre with which the celestial being shone upon the worshipper. When all such external symbols ceased to be used, there was often a hesitancy to employ the phrase "to see the face of God," and it has frequently been changed in our Hebrew text, though sometimes allowed to remain. It was taught that no man can see the face of God and live, and later that his face cannot be seen. Gradually the old phraseology was vested with a new and more spiritual meaning. At first "peace" meant "prosperity," and therefore included the special favor sought.

In course of time it came to signify inner satisfaction, tranquillity of mind, rest in contemplation of the divine perfection. The repetition of the sacred formula may have conveyed more of this spiritual consolation even in ancient Israel than the often too manifest pursuit of material blessings may lead one to imagine.

## XIV

### THE SONG OF THE ARK
(Num. 10 : 35, 36)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Rise, O Yahwe, thy enemies be scattered!
Let those who hate thee flee before thy face!

To Israel's thousands, O Yahwe, return!

#### 2. *The Notes*

The Greek version, in some manuscripts, suggests that the word "myriads," which makes the line too long and the number excessive, has been added by a later hand.

#### 3. *The Exposition*

When the ark was carried with the army to the battle, the two first lines were spoken, the last when it was brought back to the sanctuary. The sacred chest would not have

been taken along if it had not been thought to insure in a special manner Yahwe's presence and assistance, nor would it have been felt to be so important that it be brought back safely to Israel's thousands, if they had not regarded its presence in the sanctuary as a guarantee of prosperity. We know from the story of its capture by the Philistines and the evil its possession brought to them, as well as from the account of the dire consequences of merely touching it, that the power of Yahwe was considered as closely connected with it. But critical students may have somewhat unnecessarily insisted upon the absolute identification of the ark with Yahwe. A stone, a chest, or a building may be thought of as the place where a divine being chooses by preference to dwell, or to manifest himself, without excluding, on this account, the idea that his power may be independent of it and extend far and wide beyond its boundary. The prayer or exhortation is directed to the moral agent, not to the object with which he may associate the exercise of his power. As the ark does not seem to have been removed from the temple in Jerusalem, after it had been brought there, and carried into the wars, these words almost certainly come from the period before Solomon's reign.

## XV

### THE SONG OF THE CROSSING OF ARNON
(Num. 21 : 14, 15)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Yahwe came, dried the Red Sea up,
With other streams Arnon as well,
Which falls where stands the capital,
And against Moab's border leans.

#### 2. *The Notes*

The collection whence this song was taken was called "The Book of Wars," not "The Book of the Wars of Yahwe." Yahwe is the first word of the song itself, which seems to have been "*Yahwe atha heḫeribh Suph.*" "*We eshḋ ha-neḫalim*" is dittography and *d* is a copyist's error for *r*. Yahwe first dried up the Sea of Suph, then other streams, and finally Arnon. Afterward the Jordan, too, was dried up; but that is later. The Arnon falls suddenly at the place where the city, the capital, stands, and the river forms the boundary of Moab.

#### 3. *The Exposition*

The situation is clearly that of the conceived advance of Yahwe from the south. He dries up the waters so that his

people can proceed—the Red Sea, the other streams, and the Arnon. The Amoritish kingdom of Sihon has pushed the border of Moab down to the Arnon. There is no valid reason for doubting that the clans invading the East Jordan country from the south found such a kingdom north of the Arnon. This song may go back to the early period after the invasion, preserving the memory of actual progress, while naturally ascribing to Yahwe miraculous assistance.

## XVI

### THE SONG OF THE CAPTURE OF BE'ER
(Num. 21 : 17, 18)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Spring up, O well; sing to it,
Well which the princes digged,
The nation's nobles delved,
And that with staves and sceptre.

#### 2. *The Exposition*

The capture of the city of Be'er is described in a song which, alluding to the meaning of its name, represents the princes marshalling their hosts against the walls of the town as diggers of a well. The real nature of their work is, however, indicated by the tools they use. Staves and

sceptres are not used in digging wells, but are the insignia of command and martial authority. It is not known where Be'er was, but there is no reason to question that the memory of an early conquest by the invaders of such a town is preserved in the song.

## XVII

### THE SONG OF SIHON'S CONQUESTS
(Num. 21 : 27–30)

#### 1. *The Translation*

To Heshbon come, let built be,
Established Sihon's city!
For fire went forth from Heshbon,
From Sihon's town a flame burst;
It swept through Moab's cities,
Consumed Arnon's high places.

Let Heshbon be built up, whence has gone forth destruction to Moab (Num. 21 : 27, 28)

Woe unto thee, O Moab!
Perished has Chemosh' people.
He gave his sons as captives,
His daughters into exile.
Lost is their seed, from Heshbon
To Daibon, and the women.

For the people of Moab have perished (21 : 29)

### 2. *The Notes*

In verse 28 we should probably read *'are* (cities), and for *ba'ale*, with the Greek version, *ba'arah;* in verse 29 "to the king of the Amorites, Sihon," is an explanatory gloss; in verse 30 "from" should be added before Heshbon, and the metrically redundant line rendered in the Greek "still a fire burnt over Moab" and in the Hebrew "unto Nophah which is unto Medebah," should be removed.

### 3. *The Exposition*

The poet exhorts his hearers to come to Heshbon to build up and establish Sihon's city taken from him by the Israelitish tribes. For from this city the fire had gone forth that had consumed all of Moab down to the Arnon and beyond. So completely had Sihon destroyed the Moabitish strongholds that Chemosh's people seemed to have perished from Heshbon in the north to Daibon in the south. Now that the land of Sihon had been taken from him, let the city where he reigned and which had suffered during the siege at the hands of the Israelites be built up and established. What we know to-day concerning the spread of Amoritish power in Syria, Mesopotamia, and even Babylonia renders it altogether natural to suppose that there once was an Amoritish kingdom like that of Sihon in the East Jordan country which invaded and temporarily subdued Moab. There is not the slightest indication that the

Israelites are coming down from the north, as has been frequently maintained by critics. This song does not reflect any known situation in the ninth or eighth centuries, and no motive can be seen for an invention of such a kingdom at a later time. The poet was probably a citizen of Heshbon and may have lived not very long after the Israelitish conquest.

## XVIII

### THE PROPHECIES OF BALAAM

(Num. 23, 24)

#### 1. *The Translation*

(1) *The Prophecy of Israel's Greatness* (*Num.* 23 : 7–10)

**Balak desires me to curse Israel, the exempt (Num. 23 : 7, 8)**

From Edom has Balak me brought,
And from Kedem's hills Moab's king.

Come thou, and curse Jacob for me,
Come, bring down on Israel wrath!

Whom God has not cursed, can I curse,
Or doom whom Yahwe has not doomed?

**Israel is unique, populous, righteous (23 : 9, 10)**

From the top of the rocks I descry,
From the hills I gaze upon him.

A people that dwells by itself;
Unlike any other it is.

Who can number of Jacob the dust,
Or a fourth part of Israel count?

Let me die as the just one dies,
My last end be like unto his.

(2) *The Prophecy of Israel's Conquering Power*
(*Num.* 23 : 18–24)

God is unalterably determined to bless righteous Israel (23 : 18–21)

Rise, Balak, to me listen,
Give ear, O son of Zippor!

God cannot lie, as man does,
As son of man repents not.

Speaks he, must he not do it,
Accomplish what he uttered?

To bless, I am commissioned,
Must bless, cannot reverse it.

He sees no sin in Jacob,
In Israel no evil.

Yahwe, his God, is with him,
A king gives glory to him.

Who shall surely be successful in conquest (23 : 22–24)

No spell has power on Jacob,
No charm against Israel.

Jacob will hear in due time
What things God has wrought for him.

A lion is this people,
It rises like a lion;

Rests not till prey he's tasted,
And drank of slain the life-blood.

(3) *The Prophecy of Israel's Prosperity* (*Num.* 24 : 3–9)

Balaam, the son of Beor, says,
The man whose eyes are closed declares;

Balaam, the seer, who hath visions from God (24 : 3, 4)

He says who hears the words of God,
From the Most High his knowledge has;

The visions of the Almighty sees,
And prostrate, opened has his eyes:

How goodly, Jacob, are thy tents,
Thy tabernacles, Israel!

Declares the growth and prosperity of Israel (24 : 5–7)

As river-beds they spread themselves,
As gardens by the river side,

As aloes that Yahwe plants,
As cedars by the water's edge.

Water shall from his buckets flow,
His seed shall grow by many streams.

His king shall above Agag rise,
Exalted shall his kingdom be.

And the exaltation of Israel's king (24 : 7–9)

From Egypt God has brought him forth,
Like the wild ox, such is his strength.

He hostile nations shall devour,
He shall in pieces break their bones.

He couches like a lion, stoops
Like lioness. Who shall him rouse?

(4) *The Prophecy of Israel's King* (*Num.* 24 : 15–19)

Balaam, the seer, who hath visions from God (24 : 15, 16)

Balaam, the son of Beor, says,
The man whose eyes are closed declares;

He says who hears the words of God,
From the Most High his knowledge has;

The visions of the Almighty sees,
And prostrate, opened has his eyes:

Declares that the future king shall smite Moab and Edom (24 : 17–19)

I see it, but it is not now,
Behold it, but it is not near:

From Jacob there comes forth a star,
A sceptre springs from Israel.

All Moab's corners it will smite,
And break down all the sons of Seth.

And Edom will be subject land,
The remnant perish of Seir.

(5) *The Prophecy on Amalek* (*Num.* 24 : 20)

Amalek, of nations first,
His end is sure destruction.

Amalek, once so powerful, is doomed (24 : 20)

(6) *The Prophecy on the Kenite* (*Num.* 24 : 21, 22)

Right strong is thy dwelling-place,
Thy nest is set on the rock;
Yet wasted shall Cain be.
How soon captures Ashur thee?

The Kenite, so apparently secure, shall be devastated (24 : 21, 22)

(7) *The Prophecy on the Amorite* (*Num.* 24 : 23, 24)

Woe, who can live when God does this?
He who from Cyprus issued forth,
Afflicted Asher, Eber smote;
But he at length shall perish, too.

Even the resistless Amorite shall succumb (24 : 23, 24)

## 2. *The Notes*

For "Aram" we should probably read "Edom," in 23 : 7, *d* having been mistaken for *r*. This is suggested also by the parallelism. For the hills of Kedem are not in Mesopotamia, but south and south-east of Moab. Kedem is the Kedema of the Senute story. In 24 : 7 the Massoretic "Agag" is probably to be preferred to the "Gog" of most MSS. of the Greek. Gog could scarcely have been changed to Agag, while the comparison with the Amalekite king may have seemed insufficient in the days when the

king of Gog who became "King Gog," the mighty ruler in Asia Minor and Scythia, possibly Mithradates of Pontus (cp. article "Scythians," in *Encyclopædia Biblica*), appealed so strongly to the imagination. The reading "Gog" may be secondary even in the Greek version. The redundant third line in verse 18: "And Israel he makes strength" should be stricken out as well as the first line of verse 19 which forms with it the interloping distich; and the second line of verse 19 is more original than its copy, the second line of verse 18. For *me'ir* we should read *misse'ir*, the *s* having fallen out. Whether *ashr* should be pronounced Asher or Ashur in verse 22 is doubtful, but the latter is more probable. "And seeing Og," read by the Greek translator in his Hebrew text (vs. 23), is missing in the Massoretic text, having been overlooked by some copyist. Probably Og had already been substituted for "the Amorite." In verse 24 read *yaṣa'*; *m* has been inadvertently repeated. This was the reading the Greek translator had before him. Whether *ashr* should be pronounced Ashur or Asher is again uncertain, though the latter is more probable. The metre is different in the different oracles.

### 3. *The Exposition*

Seven oracles are ascribed to Bala'am ben Beor. Originally, this figure was probably suggested by the name of one of the Edomitish kings, Bela' ben Beor. He is represented as having been called by the neighboring king of Moab,

Balak ben Zippor, to curse Israel. The historic situation is forgotten in 23 : 9b, where Israel is described as a people dwelling by itself and not like any other. This does not apply to nomads invading the settled country, but to a nation that has long been established and shown its peculiar character. The second oracle emphasizes the unalterableness of the divine decree revealed to Balaam, which cannot be changed by any unauthorized spell or incantation. The three distichs describing the prophet at the beginning of the third oracle are repeated in the fourth. In the picture of Israel's glorious future, the king is not wanting. He is to be greater than Agag. It is significant that he is the Amalekite king. Not Saul, but David, put an end to the Amalekite kingdom. He has proven himself to be the greater king. David is also the star that comes forth from Jacob in due time, and it was his achievements to smite Moab and subdue Edom. Seth probably designates the original inhabitants of Moab, as Seir those of Edom.

The oracle on Amalek represents this people as the first of nations. In the days of Saul and David they lived south of the Negeb, occupied by Philistines, Jerahmeelites, and Kenites, and were dangerous neighbors, making raids into the Negeb. They were regarded as kinsmen to the Edomites. While the Edomites established themselves in Seir and subdued the Horites there, the Amalekites seem to have pushed into the region now known as El Tih.

Possibly they preceded the Jerahmeelites and the Kenites as well as the Philistines, even in the Negeb. The memory of their long period of power, concerning which we have no information, lived fresh in the mind of the poet. But the kingdom had fallen through David.

The tribe of Qain or Cain, the Kenites, lived in the land of Nod, in the eastern part of the Negeb, west of the Arabah, where Kenite place-names still survive. It is a land of rocks and mountains. There is the Har Halak, "the slippery mountain," so called because of its smooth, brittle, shaly stone which breaks and causes the foot to slip as one ascends it, the Moserah where Aaron was supposed to have died, still called Jebel Madhara. There were the Rechabite valleys and high plateaus. The Kenites had for their neighbors at one time on the south and south-west the Ashurim, the Ashurites, and the poet seems to have known how ill they fared at their hands. It is a curious notion, suggested by no Hebrew record or cuneiform inscription, that the Assyrians invaded these rocky fastnesses and carried the Kenites away to Nineveh, showing how easily and uncritically modern scribes are led astray by the similarity of a name, just as the scribes of earlier days. In the days of David's outlaw life the Kenites still flourished in their part of the Negeb and had cities. The legend knows Cain as a city-builder as well as a wanderer and vagabond. There is no record that David attempted to invade their country. The weakening of Amalekite power probably

gave the Ashurites a chance to waste this region and carry away captives.

Something more important than the destruction of Amalekites and Kenites stirs the soul of the prophet. Who can resist the divine power when even the great Amoritish kingdoms must succumb? The Amorites had swept down from the north. They had issued forth "from the sides of Kittim (Cyprus)." The phrase is obscure. It may possibly mean "from the sides, *i. e.*, the shores of the Mediterranean looking toward, opposite Cyprus," or it may indicate that the Amorite had invaded Cyprus and come forth from there to turn his attention in another direction; or there may have been a tradition to the effect that he had ultimately come from Cyprus, as the Philistine from Crete, the Aramæan from Kir, and the Israelite from Muzur or Egypt. The coupling of Amorites with Hittites as foreigners, in Ezekiel, the persistent connection of the Canaanites with the Egyptians and other Hamites, or the existence of some distinctly foreign element among the Amorites may have given rise to such a tradition. The Amorite had certainly established himself in the north-west, where we find him in the period of Babylonian and Egyptian power in Syria. From his northern home he fell upon the southern neighbors, afflicted the Asherites, who are already settled in the days of Thothmes III (1503–1447 B. C.) in the territory occupied by the tribe Asher, and the sons of Eber, the Hebrews in the widest sense, the

Habiri of the El Amarna correspondence, the kindred tribes and clans that made up Israel, Judah, Edom, Moab, and Ammon. In the East Jordan country the chief representatives of this Amoritish power were Og of Bashan and Sihon of Heshbon. But the Amorites, like the Canaanites, were subjected by David and Solomon. There is nothing in these oracles that necessitates a later origin than the latter part of David's reign and much that points to this period as the time of composition. The political situation seems to preclude a later age, while the beauty of style, the strength of patriotic feeling, and the depth of sentiment generally are not out of harmony with a period that produced such a poet as David.

## XIX

### THE SONG OF MOSES: YAHWE'S JUST DEALINGS WITH ISRAEL

(Deut. 32 : 1–43)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Listen, O heavens and earth, to my gracious words (Deut. 32 : 1, 2)

Give ear, O heavens, I will speak;
Listen, O earth, to my mouth's words!
Let my instruction fall like rain,
And like the dew my words drop down,
Like showers on the tender grass,
Like streams upon the withered herb.

Let me proclaim the righteous acts of Yahwe (32 : 3–7)

For Yahwe's name I will proclaim.
O give ye honor to our God!
A rock is he, perfect his work,
For all his ways are right and true:
A faithful God, in nothing false,
He ever upright is and just.

To Yahwe Israel was allotted as his people (32 : 8, 9)

When the Most High scattered mankind,
And parted wide the sons of men,
And fixed for nations their abodes,
In number as the sons of God,
On Yahwe's lot fell Israel,
Jacob became his heritage.

He found Israel in the desert and gave him abundance of all things (32 : 10–14)

He found him in the wilderness,
A desert where no water was;
He watched him, kept him, cared for him,
As for the apple of his eye.
As eagle that stirs up her nest,
Flutters and soars above her young,

He spread abroad his wings, took him,
And on his pinions held him high;
He let him o'er high places ride,
And let him eat fruit of the field;
Let him suck honey from the cliff,
And oil out of the flinty rock.

Butter of kine, and milk of sheep,
And fat he had of lambs and rams,
The sons of Bashan and the goats,
Wheat, and the blood of grapes, the wine.

Then Israel forgot Yahwe (32 : 15–18)

Thus Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked,
Forgot the God who had him made.

Who declared that he would severely punish Israel, even to extinction (32 : 19–26)

Yahwe saw it, and cast him off,
With his own sons and daughters wroth,
Said: "I will hide my face from them,
And see what then the end will be;
For they a froward people are,
And children who will keep no faith.

"They angered me with a non-God,
They with their idols me provoked,
I'll anger them with a non-people,
Provoke them through a foolish folk.
A fire is kindled in my wrath,
And burns unto the lowest hell.

"I will heap evils upon them,
Will upon them my arrows spend,
Waste them with hunger, them devour
With heat and bitter pestilence;
The teeth of beasts let loose on them,
Poison of snakes that crawl in dust.

"Without, the sword bereavement brings,
And in the chambers terror reigns;
Young man and maiden both must go,
The suckling and the gray-haired man.
I said: 'I'll scatter them afar,
Make them forgotten among men.'

"But I the enemy's anger feared,
Lest their foes falsely take it up,
Lest they say: 'Mighty is our hand,
And Yahwe has not done all this.'
For without wit this people is,
No understanding is in them.

**But fearing that this use of divine power be misunderstood (32 : 27–36)**

"For their vine is of Sodom's vine,
And of Gomorrah's fields it is:
Their grapes are very bitter grapes,
Like unto gall their clusters are;
Poison of dragons is their wine,
The cruel venom of the asp.

"Is not this laid in store with me,
And in my treasuries sealed up,
For day of vengeance and of wrath,
When their foot slips and they fall down?
For near is their destruction's day,
And quickly comes what is prepared."

For Yahwe will his people judge,
Will on his servants mercy have.
When he sees that their power is gone,
And none remains, shut up or free,
Then shall he say: "Where are their gods,
The rock to which they refuge took?

Yahwe will have complete vengeance on these foes (32 : 37-42)

"They ate their sacrifices fat,
And drank the wine that they poured out,
Let them rise up and help you now,
Let them your firm protection be!
For I to heaven raise my hand,
And swear, 'As I forever live,

"'When I have whet my glittering sword,
My hand the judgment has begun,
I will have vengeance on my foes,
And those that hate me recompense.
With blood my arrows will be drunk,
And flesh my sword shall then devour,

"'With blood of slain and captured men,
And of the heads of hostile chiefs.'"

Praise to Him (32 : 43)

Ye nations all, his people praise!
His servants' blood he will avenge,
Take vengeance on his enemies,
And free his people's land from guilt.

### 2. *The Notes*

Verses 5–7 seem to be an interpolation. In verse 8 we should read with the Greek version "sons of God" instead of "sons of Israel"; in verse 9 strike "for" and substitute "Israel" for "his people"; and in verse 11 read "upon his pinions." Verse 12 interrupts the description and is clearly a marginal gloss. "Earth" is an addition, making the line too long in verse 13a; "thou shalt drink" in verse 13b and the second line in verse 15, as seen by the personal pronoun, as well as the fourth line, are also additions. Verses 17 and 18 are an interpolation. "And he said" is added in verse 19, correctly so far as the sense goes, but making the line too long. Verses 29–31 are an interpolation. Verse 39 is also interpolated.

### 3. *The Exposition*

Heaven and earth are exhorted to listen to this hymn in praise of Yahwe and his justice in dealing with Israel. Having described the character of Yahwe, it adverts to the old idea that Israel had fallen to the lot of Yahwe to guard as its tutelary deity at the time when mankind had been scattered, the nations had been assigned their abodes, and each had been intrusted by Elyon to its particular god. "The sons of the gods" originally meant the gods, those who belong to the category of *elohim*. The gods of the nations were as truly gods as Yahwe, whose special charge

was Israel. Later they were thought of as "angels," and the author probably was unconscious of the difficulty which led those who established our present Hebrew text to change "God" into "Israel," with the curious result of creating as many nations as there were members of the chosen people. Yahwe's care of Israel is splendidly compared with that of an eagle of her young. It is important to notice that it is in the wilderness Yahwe finds Israel. Bountifully provided for, Jacob grew fat and kicked, and forgot Yahwe. The poet looks back upon the rejection of Israel and explains its cause. They had angered him by worshipping a god who was no god in the truest sense and by bowing before idols. Therefore Yahwe had angered them (5: 21) by a nation that was not a nation in the truest sense. As the Assyrian empire was not a real nation, so Baal Melkarth, or whatever god the poet may have had in mind, was not a real god. Yahwe has judged his people and destroyed Israel. Thereby he has avenged his servants in the nation, whose blood had been impiously shed. His justice has been vindicated, and the nations are exhorted to praise him.

It is evident that the poet has behind him the whole course of Israel's history, down to the destruction of the kingdom, in 723 B. C., and that he has been thoroughly influenced by the teaching of the great prophets. His allusions to the murder of Yahwe's special servants in the nation render it possible that he has in mind the conditions of

Manasseh's reign, as we do not hear of the killing of prophets before that time. His distinction between Yahwe and gods who are no gods, or not God, as well as his apparent interpretation of "sons of God" as angels, and the similarity of his thought to that of the Deuteronomistic writers, seem to indicate a later time. It may be that he has also seen the fall of Jerusalem and includes in Jacob or Israel Judah as well as the northern kingdom.

### 4. *The Value of the Poem*

Attention has already been called to the historical sweep of this choice poem. It says most definitely that Yahwe found Israel in the desert and placed the people in an agricultural environment. This was a step upward in civilization, but exposed them to influences which tended to make a step downward in religion. Prosperity led to idolatry and forced Yahwe to punish his people severely.

As a poem this passage takes fine rank. Its imagery is expressive; its ideas in the spirit of the prophets. It is manifestly not such an utterance as Moses could have made, for it reviews the history of the nation for many centuries subsequent to his day, but it is worthy of the place assigned it.

## XX

### THE BLESSING OF MOSES: ORACLES ON THE TRIBES
(Deut. 33 : 1–29)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Coming from Sinai, at Kadesh, Yahwe spoke to Israel (Deut. 33 : 1–5)

Yahwe came forth from Sinai,
From Seir rose unto them,
Shone from the mount of Paran,
Came to Meribath Kadesh,

Saved by his arm his people,
And all his saints by his hands.
Then at his feet they sat down,
And to his words they listened.

His were the throngs of Jacob;
King was he in Jeshurun,
When the nation's chiefs were gathered
Israel's tribes together.

(1) *Concerning Reuben:*

Let Reuben be spared (33 : 6)

Let Reuben live, let him not die,
Or few in number be his men.

(2) *Concerning Judah:*

Give Judah help (33 : 7)

Harken, Yahwe, to Judah's voice,
And to his people bring him in.

With thine own hands fight thou for him,
Against his foes be thou his help!

(3) *Concerning Levi:*

Let Levi be Israel's teacher and priest (33 : 8–10)

Thy Thummim and thy Urim
Are for the men thou lovest,
Whom thou didst prove at Massah,
Try at Meribah's waters,

Of father said and mother,
"I know them not, nor brother!"
Thy word they have accomplished,
Thy covenant remembered.

They teach thy rights to Jacob,
Give Israel instruction;
Bring incense in thy nostrils,
Burnt offerings on thy altar.

(4) *Concerning Benjamin:*

Let Benjamin watch over Yahwe's shrine (33 : 12)

Yahwe's beloved lives
In safety by his side.
He watches him all day,
Between his shoulders dwells.

(5) *Concerning Joseph:*

May Joseph be blessed with rich prosperity and power (33 : 13–17)

May his land be blest by Yahwe
With the best from heaven above,

The best that the sun brings forth,
The best that the moons produce,

The best of primeval hills,
Of eternal mountains the best,
Of the earth and its fulness the best,
The good-will of Sinai's God!

How fine is his first-born bull!
The wild ox's horns he has.
With them he the nations gores,
To the ends of the earth he goes.

(6, 7) *Concerning Zebulon (and Issachar):*

Zebulon and Issachar shall possess the spoil of the sea (33 : 18, 19)

In raids rejoice, O Zebulon,
And in thy tents, O Issachar!

They to their mountain nations call;
They bring right sacrifices there.

The riches of the sea they suck,
The hidden treasures of the sand.

(8) *Concerning Gad:*

Gad shall make himself a power (33 : 20, 21)

Blessed be Gad, a lion like,
He couches, tears both arm and head.

He chose himself the best, for there
A ruler's portion was reserved,

Yet with the chiefs of Jacob came,
To carry Yahwe's justice out.

(9) *Concerning Dan:*

Dan is a lion's whelp,
From Bashan he leaps forth.

Dan shall foray in Bashan (33 : 22)

(10) *Concerning Naphtali:*

Sated with grace is Naphtali,
Of Yahwe's blessings he is full,
Possesses lake and Merom.

Naphtali shall be happy possessing the sea and the upper Jordan (33 : 23)

(11) *Concerning Asher:*

Blest above sons is Asher,
His foot is bathed in oil,
Iron and brass thy bars are,
Thy strength is as thy days.

Asher shall be prosperous and secure (33 : 24, 25)

No god is like Jeshurun's,
Riding through heaven to help thee,
The God of old thy refuge,
His arms beneath thee ever.

Israel's God is incomparable; he protects and cares for his people (33 : 26–29)

He drove the foe before thee;
He said to him: "Destroy now!"
And Israel dwelt in safety,
Secure was Jacob's fountain.

In land of corn and new wine,
Whose heaven drops the dew down,
Thou, Israel, art happy.
Saved people, who is like thee?

Yahwe is shield that helps thee,
Is sword that gives thee glory.
Thine enemies bow to thee,
While on their heights thou marchest.

### 2. *The Notes*

In verse 2 "and" has been added at the beginning of the second and fourth lines. For the "holy myriads" we should read "Meribath Kadesh." With the Greek version the two lines "in his right hand there was the fire of a law for him, also the lover of nations," should be amended into "he saved by his right hand his people." "Moses commanded us a law" is a marginal gloss. In verse 9 "he did not know" should be stricken out as well as "his sons he did not know." Verse 11 is an addition. In verse 16 we should probably read, Sinai for *seneh*, the "bush," and strike the last two lines. In verse 17 "to" gives a better sense than "together," and is supported by the Greek; the last two lines are redundant. In verse 20 "he spreads himself" is an addition; for "the chiefs of the people," we should read "with the chiefs of Jacob," and "his judgments with Israel" should be eliminated. "Darom" should be

changed to "Merom" in verse 23. Naphtali had nothing to do with "Darom" or "the South"; it possessed the places on Lake Merom, the modern Huleh. The second line in verse 24 is an addition. Strike "in" before Yahwe, and "which" in verse 29. Metre and strophic structure vary in the oracles.

### 3. *The Exposition*

Verses 1–5 are an introduction and verses 26–29 an epilogue to the oracles on the eleven tribes. The first tetrastich describes the progress of Yahwe from Sinai to Meribath Kadesh. Sinai seems to have been a mountain in the land of Midian, east of the northern end of the Aelanitic Gulf. It was counted as belonging to the chain designated as Mount Seir. Hence Sinai is also represented as being in Edom's land. The particular peak has not been identified. Christian tradition, seeking it nearer Egypt, has moved it from top to top on the so-called Sinaitic peninsula, or El Tor. Whether it has survived in the nomenclature of the region between El Oela and Petra future exploration may reveal. It was preserved by the tribes of the Negeb and Judah, and is the more likely to be genuine as it is derived from the name of the moon-god, Sin. Ephraimitish stories told of a mountain of the gods called Horeb. This may have been another mountain peak in the same region. There are indications that the Judaic tradition brought Yahwe through the "valley of Moses" at

Petra down to the wilderness of Paran, the high plateau of the southern Negeb, and to Meribath Kadesh. This name means "the Struggle of the Devotee," and is probably connected with some legend concerning the famous *kadesh*, or devotee, of the district, Barnea. The place is probably the modern 'Ain Ḳdêrât, the fountain *par excellence* in this region; "the waters of Meribah" are then the fine stream that flows down from this fountain. Here Yahwe's people sat at his feet and listened to his words. He was recognized as king by the chiefs of Israel. The region around Zin (Jebel 'Araif), Ḳadesh Barnea (possibly 'Ain Ḳdês), and Meribath Kadesh (probably El 'Ain) seems to have been thought of as the place where the Mosaic oracles were given before the legislation was brought back to Sinai in the land of Edom or Pisgah in the land of Moab. And some of the oracles ascribed to Moses were descriptions of the tribes and their future. When the real author lived, Reuben seemed in danger of extinction, Judah fought alone against its enemies and was not connected with the other tribes, Simeon had ceased to be a tribe, Levi was a priestly caste, Yahwe had his home in Benjamin, Joseph was richly blessed and powerful, Zebulon and Issachar had a sanctuary on a holy mountain and reached to the Mediterranean, Dan lived in the north-east, Naphtali possessed the shores of the lakes of Galilee and Merom, Asher had long defended its rich territory, the whole kingdom of Israel was prosperous and victorious over its enemies.

The situation is clearly that of the northern kingdom between Jeroboam I and Jeroboam II, and the poet a citizen of this kingdom. It is important to observe that he knows the Levites as oracle-givers and offerers of sacrifices, apparently chosen for this office because of their faithfulness when Yahwe tried them at Massah or Meribah's waters, whatever this trial may have been, and that he regards as proper the sacrifices on the holy mountain in the territory of Zebulon and Issachar, whether this be Tabor or Carmel.

## XXI

### THE CURSE OF JERICHO

(Josh. 6 : 26)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Cursed be the man before Yahwe
Who rises up and builds this town!

#### 2 *The Exposition*

After Jericho, which had existed in the Canaanitish period, as is now known from the excavations carried on by the Germans, had been destroyed, it lay in ruins for a long time. This in itself showed that a curse rested on the place. When it was finally rebuilt, the custom of offering one or more children to secure the success of the enterprise

and the removal of the curse was followed. Whether or not the new city existed for any length of time, this was probably felt to be a sign that the curse continued, and led to this saying ascribed in later times to Joshua.

## XXII

### THE COMMAND TO THE SUN AND THE MOON

(Josh. 10 : 12b, 13)

#### 1. *The Translation*

"Sun, stand thou still in Gibeon,
Moon, in the vale of Aiyalon!"
The sun stood still and the moon stayed,
Till vengeance on their foes they took.

#### 2. *The Exposition*

This song was introduced in the narrative from the collection known as "The Book of Jashar," or "The Book of the Brave." We do not know what its connection was in the song-book, but it is altogether probable that it described an incident of the battle of Gibeon against the Amorites. It is more doubtful whether the command came from Joshua. The words may have been originally uttered by Yahwe, exhorting the two celestial powers to aid in the pursuit of

the enemy. They are addressed as beings who can listen and stay their course, if they will. Their acquiescence resulted in the unique spectacle of the sun standing still over Gibeon and the moon over the valley of Aiyalon until the people could wreak complete vengeance on their foes. The poet no doubt lived at a time when the battle was still in fresh memory, but long enough after it for a story to have developed that the day had been miraculously prolonged. He, of course, was not troubled by any considerations as to what would have happened to the universe and the pursuing Israelites, if the sun and the moon had actually stood still, or whether the killing of a few more Amorites would have justified an interference entailing consequences of incalculable cosmic significance. The gods could do what they pleased. Nor was the prose-writer who copied the lines aware of any such difficulties, or any necessity for apologetic devices. He realized more fully than the poet that this was a most extraordinary event; there had never been any day like it. But he marvelled chiefly that a man could thus command the sun and the moon, and that Yahwe would graciously listen to a request put in that form. But Yahwe had always been good to Israel. It is not for modern men to question the value of this naïve faith, nor to reason it away by clumsy rationalistic explanations. If the sun and the moon had not seemed to many interpreters so much more important than the stars, the statement of Deborah that the stars fought in their courses against

Sisera would probably have given rise to similar attempts to rob a text, beautiful in its simplicity and valuable in its historic place, of its natural meaning.

## XXIII

### THE SONG OF DEBORAH
(Judges 5 : 2–31)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Let me sing in praise of Yahwe! (Judges 5 : 2, 3)

When in Israel firstlings are brought,
When the people of Yahwe bring gifts,
Unto Yahwe will I sing a song,
Unto Israel's God will I sing.

In earthquake and storm, Thou camest from Edom (5 : 4, 5)

Yahwe, when thou camest from Seir,
When thou marchedst from Edom's land,
Earth trembled, the heavens dropped rain,
In thy presence the mountains streamed.

In the days of Shamgar ben Anath,
Ere the days of Jael came,
Wayfarers abandoned the paths,
Men travelled by roundabout roads.

When Deborah arose to meet the need of her people (5 : 6–8)

Open regions in Israel ceased,
Hamlet dwellers no longer were found,

Till the time when I, Deborah, rose,
I, a mother in Israel, rose.

At the new moons the gods lacked food,
For they had no barley bread.
Nor a shield was seen nor a spear
Among Israel's forty thousand.

Of Israel's rulers I think,
Of the nobles in Yahwe's people,
They rode upon beautiful asses,
And sat upon lions' skins.

The rulers began to take counsel together and encourage one another (5 : 9–11)

They walked on the way and sang
To the sound of the piper's notes.
There they told of the deeds of Yahwe,
When his people came down 'gainst the towns.

Rise up, O Deborah, rise,
Arise, sing a song, arise!
Up, Barak, and prisoners take,
Take thy captives, Abinoam's son!

They called upon Deborah and Barak to take the lead (5 : 12)

Then like heroes the people came down,
Yahwe's people came down like men.
From Ephraim princes came,
After them Benjamin and his clans.

The people responded from six tribes (5 : 13–15a)

Truncheon-bearers from Machir came,
And from Zebulon chiefs of the tribe;
With Deborah Issachar's princes,
And from Naphtali Barak's clan.

Four of the tribes refused to help (5 : 15b–18)

In the valley they followed his steps;
As he led them, his people rushed down.
By the water-courses of Reuben,
The searchings of heart were great;

He sat quiet between the ash-heaps,
To list to the call of the flocks.
Gilead remained beyond Jordan,
Dan stayed where the stream breaks forth.

Asher sought protection in ships;
He dwells on the shore of the sea.
Zebulon poured his soul out to death.
Naphtali on the fields of the heights.

The battle raged near Megiddo; the very heavens opposed Sisera, the Canaanitish general; the river Kishon ran with blood (5 : 19–22)

To the battle the kings came down;
Then the kings of Canaan fought.
At Taanach, by Megiddo's waters
No booty of silver they took.

From heaven the stars were fighting,
From their courses with Sisera.
The Kishon swept them away,
Full of blood was the river Kishon.

Trodden down were the strongest of men,
Battered by the horses' hoofs,
By the galloping of the steeds,
As they galloped over the heights.

"Hurl a curse on Meroz!" says Yahwe,
"Curse ye bitterly those who dwell there!"
For they came not to Yahwe's aid,
To the help of Yahwe like men.

A curse upon faithless Meroz! (5 : 23)

Above women blessed is Jael,
Above women that dwell in tents.
He asked water, she gave him milk,
In a bowl she reached him curds.

Her hand she stretched out to the tent-pin,
With her right hand the hammer she seized;
Then his head she hammers and crushes,
She smites through his temple, destroys it.

Blessed be Jael, who had the courage to kill the unthinking Sisera as he drank (52 : 24, 27)

He bends down at her feet and falls,
He lies there between her feet.
In the place where Sisera fell,
There he lies bereft of life.

At the window she eagerly looks,
At the lattice, Sisera's mother.
Why is his chariot so slow?
Why tarry the feet of his horses?

In vain does his mother watch for his return with spoil (5 : 28–30)

A princess wisely gives answer,
She answers the question herself:
"They are finding, distributing booty,
A wench or two for each man;

"A booty of dyed stuff for Sisera,
An embroidered piece for his queen."
Thus perish thine enemies, Yahwe!
Those that love thee shall rise like the sun.

So may Yahwe's enemies perish! (5 : 31)

### 2. *The Notes*

In verse 2 strike "bless ye," and in verse 3 the first line; Deborah is not singing to kings, and there should not be five lines in the stanza. *Sedeh* means "mountain," "high plateau," as well as "field." Drop "also" before "heavens" in verse 4. The last line of the second tetrastich is found in verse 5, where "in thy presence" should be substituted for "in the presence of Yahwe." This line takes the place of verse 4d, "also the clouds dropped water," an obvious gloss. Another interpolation is the long line: "This Sinai from the presence of Yahwe, the God of Israel." In verse 6b read *liphenê* "before," instead of *be* "in." In verse 6 strike *weholeke*. The subject of the second "ceased," "hamlet-dwellers," has fallen out in the next verse. Insert "in" before "new moons," and for "then" read *'en lahem*, overlooked because of its similarity to *lehem*, "there was not for them." "My heart belongs to" means "I think of"

in verse 9; "bless ye" should go out. The last two words of the first line in verse 11 are redundant, as well as the explanatory gloss "the righteous deeds of his villagers in Israel," and for "then they came down" read *yarad* "he came down." In verse 13 drop *sarid;* in verse 14 read *sarim* "princes," for *sharsham*, "their root." Drop "Amalek" and at the end of the verse "scribe." In verse 15b read "in Naphtali" for "Issachar," and "*kenat*," "clan" for *ken* "so." Barak belonged to Naphtali. In 15c read *yarad* for *shalaḥ*, and restore with the aid of the Greek 15d *be Barak shullaḥ ammo*, "by Barak his people was sent, *i. e.*, led." For "why didst thou sit" read "he sat" in verse 16; 16c is a dittograph. Verse 17d has been misplaced; it should follow 17a, and read *shakan Dan 'al miphraṣau*, or, striking *shakan, Dan 'al miphraṣau yishkon.* The next line then becomes: "Asher is protected in ships." "People" should be removed in verse 18. Strike the second "they fought" in verse 20; and in verse 21 read *middamim* for *naḥal kedumim*, and *nidreku* for *tidreki.* The "souls of strength" are "strong men." Point *halemu* as a passive, and supply at the end "'*ale sadeh*" or '*al bamoth.* Remove the "angel" in verse 23 as a dogmatic interpolation spoiling the line. "The wife of Heber, the Kenite," has been inserted in verse 24 from the prose narrative. "The nobles" should be removed in verse 25. "Sisera" has been inserted in 26c in the wrong place; the name belongs to 27c. The second "he bent,

he fell," is a dittograph. The first word of verse 23 should be pointed as a singular. The second "booty of dyed stuffs" is a dittograph. Read *rikmah rikmathain leṣawa'ro* and strike the rest in the last line of verse 30. "Yahwe" and "in its power" have been added in verse 31.

### 3. *The Exposition*

The ode was apparently sung by Deborah at the annual festival following the victory. At that time firstlings were offered to Yahwe and the people presented their gifts. Yahwe came to the battle, she sang, from Mount Seir, from the land of Edom, his home, and his coming was attended by earthquake, storm, and rain. Shamgar ben Anath has a foreign name and may have been an oppressor. It was not safe in his time to follow the ordinary paths or to live in open villages. So it was until the days of Jael, the woman whose praise the song celebrates, and through whom the final deliverance came, and until Deborah rose as a mother in Israel, stirring the tribes to action. No offerings could be made to the gods in the new moons; for it was not possible to cultivate the fields, and consequently there was no barley bread to place on their altars; and the people could not defend itself. Though there were forty thousand men who might have borne arms, one never saw a shield or a spear. Then a change came over the nobles. They began to ride about on their fine asses, hold counsel

together, or march on roads singing songs of victories won by Yahwe when his people first came down against the Canaanitish and Amoritish cities. They wanted to hear the stirring songs of the seeress; they wanted Barak, Abinoam's son, to be the leader; and the people of Yahwe came down like heroes from six tribes, Ephraim, Machir-Manasseh, and Benjamin on the south, Zebulon, Issachar, and Naphtali on the north. There were others that should have listened to the summons, like Reuben, Gilead-Gad, Dan and Asher. But they did not come. The kings of Canaan came from their strongholds and fought under the leadership of Sisera. It was supposed at one time that Sisera was a Hittite; his name reminded of Ḫetasira. But we now know that this king's name was Ḫattushillu. Sisera was probably a Canaanite. The battle raged in dead earnest near Taanach and Megiddo. There was not time to take booty. The stars themselves took part in the mighty struggle, the planetary gods descended to fight with Sisera, and the river Kishon ran with blood. The corpses of dead warriors were trodden down by the horses that galloped away from the fray. Yahwe hurls a curse on Meroz, an unknown town in the neighborhood, that should have come to his assistance. It was a woman who had roused the people; it was a woman who brought about the final victory. Blessed above women be Jael! When Sisera came to her tent and asked for water, she gave him milk in a bowl, and then smote him dead with the tent-pin. In vain did Sisera's

mother look for his return, laden with booty. He had perished, and so may all Yahwe's enemies perish! The song was probably composed in the first half of the twelfth century B. C., though it may have been written down much later.

## XXIV

### THE SONG OF HANNA: YAHWE, THE DELIVERER
(1 Sam. 2 : 1–10)

#### 1. *The Translation*

I rejoice in Yahwe's help (1 Sam. 2 : 1)

My heart is glad through Yahwe,
My horn raised up by my God,
My mouth o'er my foe is wide,
In thy prompt help I rejoice.

Yahwe is incomparable for holiness and wisdom (2 : 2–4)

No holy one like Yahwe,
No rock like our God, there is.
Speak not presumptuous words,
Let no pride come from your mouth.

Yahwe is a God who knows,
A God who can weigh men's deeds.
The bow of the strong is crushed,
The weak are girded with strength.

The rich hire themselves for bread,
Their task-work the hungry cease.
Seven children the barren has,
One many had, mourns them all.

He awards many reversals of fortune (2 : 5–8)

Yahwe puts to death, gives life,
Leads down to the grave and up,
Yahwe makes poor and gives wealth,
Brings low and sets men on high,

The needy lifts from the dust,
From dung-hill raises the poor,
To place him with noble chiefs,
To lead him to honor's seat.

The stays of the earth are his,
The world he has set on them.
The feet of his friends he keeps,
The wicked in darkness stay.

Those who trust in Him he guides (2 : 9, 10)

Man's own power gives no strength,
Yahwe can scatter his foes,
To heaven ascend and thunder,
And judge the ends of the earth.

### 2. *The Exposition*

This hymn was probably inserted in its present place and put upon the lips of Hanna because of the allusion to

the barren woman who has seven children. It is evident, however, that the occasion for writing was a victory over enemies, and it is most probable that the poet speaks in the name of Yahwe's people. The change that has been brought about through Yahwe's deliverance leads him to dwell on the reversals of fortune which characterize in general his dealings with men. That he leads down to Sheol and brings back again means that he carries a man to death's door and then restores his health to him. The psalm may be as late as the Maccabæan period.

## XXV

### DAVID'S LAMENT OVER SAUL AND JONATHAN
(2 Sam. 1 : 18–27)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Weep, O Judah, over the sad fate of Israel's heroes (2 Sam. 1 : 18–21)

Shed tears, O Judah, lament
The sad fate of Israel's pride!
Thy heights are covered with slain.
Alas, how the mighty are fallen!

Let it not be told in Gath,
Nor proclaimed in Ashkelon's streets,
Lest Philistine cities rejoice,
The uncircumcised exult.

O Gilboa's mounts, let no dew,
Nor rain ever fall upon you,
Ye high spreading fields of death,
Where disgraced was the hero's shield!

No oil wet the shield of Saul,
But the blood and the gore of the slain.
Never Jonathan's bow came back,
Nor the sword of Saul, without spoil.

Saul and Jonathan were notable warriors (1 : 22, 23)

Saul and Jonathan, pleasant, beloved,
Nor in life nor in death were parted.
They were swifter far than eagles,
They were stronger than lions both.

O women of Israel, weep,
Lament ye the sad fate of Saul!
He gave you scarlet and linen,
Put jewels of gold on your dress.

O women of Israel, Saul brought you much spoil (1 : 24)

O how are the heroes fallen!
They fell on the field of death.
On the hills lies Jonathan slain.
I am grieved for thee, O my brother!

O heroic Jonathan, how precious to me was thy love (1 : 25–27)

My delight and rapture wert thou,
Thy love was sweeter than woman's.
O how are the mighty fallen!
The sons of war have perished.

### 2. *The Notes*

For "teach" and "sons" read "lament" and "weep," and for "bow" the "hard thing," the "sad fate." The "daughters of the Philistines" are the Philistine towns. In verse 21 read *moth*, "death," for *terumoth;* the word "pleasant" may be an addition in verse 23. "Thy," in the last line of verse 25, and "Jonathan," in the first line of verse 26, are redundant.

### 3. *The Exposition*

There is absolutely no reason for doubting that this exquisite elegy comes from the heart and lips of David. It needs scarcely any word of comment. The hero's shield is disgraced when it cannot protect him. It was left on the battle-field covered with blood and gore, the evidences of Saul's bravery and the fierceness of the struggle; it was not brought home to be cleaned with oil. This was the first time that the bow of Jonathan and the sword of Saul did not return with the booty taken. As they had lived together in love, so they died together. There would be no more presents for the women of scarlet and linen and golden trinkets from the generous hands of Saul. Jonathan had been a brother to David, whether there was a formal covenant between them or not. The love of woman, dear as it was to David, had never brought him the delight

and rapture which fellowship with Jonathan gave. This song was probably sung ca. 1033 B. C., and found a place in the collection called "The Book of the Brave."

## XXVI

### DAVID'S LAMENT OVER ABNER
(2 Sam. 3 : 33, 34)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Has Abner died as Nabal died?
Thy hands are not in fetters bound,
Thy feet are not in brazen chains.
Through sons of violence thou hast fallen.

#### 2. *The Notes*

The word *ḫuggashu* "are bound" belongs to the second line and has by a mistake been added to the next line. Before "brazen chains" read, with the Greek version, "in" and not "to." The words "like Nabal" or "as one falls" in the fourth line should be stricken out. In the first line the reference is to Nabal as the Greek translator saw.

#### 3. *The Exposition*

No serious objection to Davidic authorship can be urged. David recognized that Abner's death would pave the way to Ishbaal's kingdom quite as effectively as the

success of his secret arrangement to betray his master. It would have the same result that Nabal's death had had by which he became ruler of the Calebites in Hebron. Without insulting the dead chief with whom he had had negotiations, he could compare him with the former husband of his wife Abigail, who had been a great man in his time, leaving it to his listeners, if they chose, to reflect upon the meaning of the name which happened to suggest a "fool." He had evidently not been captured as a prisoner, since his hands and feet were not bound, but must have fallen through highwaymen. He purposely used the plural. He probably knew that Joab had murdered him, but it was not politic to point to his great general as the assassin. The jury found that he had come to his death through violence, and the matter was allowed to rest with this verdict, which Joab, no doubt, understood perfectly. The lament was probably spoken seven years later than that over Saul and Jonathan.

## XXVII

### THE LAST WORDS OF DAVID: GOD BLESSES THE RIGHTEOUS RULER

(2 Sam. 23 : 1–7)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Says David, son of Jesse,
The man who was exalted,
Of Jacob's God anointed,
And Israel's sweet singer:

Through David, the sweet singer of Israel, Yahwe hath spoken (2 Sam. 23 : 1–3a)

"Through me spoke Yahwe's spirit,
His word upon my tongue was;
Thus spoke the God of Jacob,
To me said Israel's rock:

"'Who rules mankind in justice,
Who in the fear of God reigns,
Is like the light that breaks forth,
The sun on cloudless morning.'

A just ruler brings happiness (23 : 3b–4)

"Is not my house with God so?
He made with me a covenant,
His watchcare has preserved me,
What I wished has succeeded.

God has greatly blessed my reign (23 : 5)

He deals roughly with the wicked (23 : 6, 7)

"Like thorns the bad are cast off,
They are not led by his hand.
Who touches them must armed be,
With spear of wood and iron."

### 2. *The Notes*

Strike out "and says" and read "singer" instead of "songs" in verse 1; remove the excessive last line of verse 4, "for all my deliverance," and "for not" in verse 5, the last word of the first line in verse 6, and the last line of verse 7.

### 3. *The Exposition*

It is evident from the first stanza that this oracle cannot have come from David. The third stanza also shows that the author looks back upon David as the ideal king. The next tetrastich indicates that the house of David, the Davidic dynasty, has had a long and prosperous existence, as he hoped, and this longevity is felt to be due to a covenant, a promise given by Yahwe to the founder. It is only a good dynasty that can thus prosper. For wicked rulers are not led by Yahwe's hand. They depend upon their martial prowess, but may be overthrown by greater military power. In reality, they are rejected and cast off by Yahwe, while David's house flourishes. The poet has manifestly been influenced by the teaching of the great pre-exilic prophets. He lives under a good king of the Davidic line, after the fall of Samaria, perhaps Hezekiah or Josiah.

## XXVIII

### SOLOMON'S TEMPLE DEDICATION
(1 Kings 8 : 12, 13)

#### 1. *The Translation*

In heaven Shemesh is established,
Yahwe said he would dwell in darkness.
A house here have I built, thy mansion,
Thy dwelling-place for all the ages.

#### 2. *The Notes*

The first line of the tetrastich is missing in the Hebrew text. It was probably removed on account of its contents. The reference to Shemesh seemed objectionable to a later age. Fortunately, it was preserved in the Greek version. Most of the MSS. have a reading that may be translated "he made the sun known in heaven" or "he observed the sun in heaven," those that seem to represent the Lucianic recension one meaning "he established the sun in heaven." Wellhausen has rightly seen that these variants go back to forms of *bin* and *kun* in which the kaph has been mistaken for a beth. He suggested *hekin* and *hebin*. But this would make the line too short, and Yahwe belongs to the second line. The original was probably *hithkonen*, misread or wrongly copied *hithbonen*. The latter would

mean, "he observes, examines," the former "he is established," "he establishes for himself," or "he directs his thought to." This last meaning, common in later Hebrew, may have facilitated the confusion, which was made after the square characters had come into vogue. The text began with Shemesh; there is no article before *Helios* in the Greek. In the Hebrew this dedicatory stanza precedes, in the Greek it follows, the blessing (vss. 15–21) and the prayer (vss. 22–53) inserted in different places at a later time. Solomon may have pronounced the divine name Yahu. The dedication was taken from the Book of Songs (Greek 8 : 53).

### 3. *The Exposition*

Shemesh, the sun-god, has his home in the great luminary of heaven. It is a fixed abode. His path is the same from day to day. He dwells in dazzling light. On the other hand, Yahwe, or Yahu, is a divinity whose habitation is in darkness. The storm-cloud is his home. He travels in it, as in a chariot, and has no resting-place. If a temple fitting for him is to be built, it must be provided with a dark room, a *cella*, in which it shall be possible for him to live according to his preference and nature. This the oracle proclaimed which gave the king permission to erect the sanctuary. The house is so constructed that it will last for ages. It is the gift of Solomon to Yahwe, and is offered as a place for him to dwell in.

There can be no doubt that Solomon's temple was intended to be a national sanctuary. It must, then, in the first place, be devoted to the divinity whose relation to Israel was regarded as of the same character as that of Chemosh to Moab, Milkom to Ammon, and Ashur to Assyria. It was to be a Yahwe-temple, and to Yahwe it was dedicated by Solomon. Such a temple of the national God it was understood to be throughout the period of its existence, until it was destroyed by Nebuchadrezzar. This, however, did not prevent it from being a sanctuary where other gods were also worshipped. Among these gods, none was more closely identified with the temple than Shemesh, the sun-god. Ezekiel (8 : 16) describes the worship of Shemesh in the temple. Twenty men stand between the altar and the porch, with their backs to the shrine of Yahwe, facing the east and worshipping the sun-god. Josiah, in 620 B. C., destroyed the bronze horses and chariots dedicated to Shemesh that were in the temple, near the chamber of Nathan-Melech (2 Kings 23 : 11). They were probably driven in Shemesh-processions. There seems to have been a broad way where horses were driven between the temple and the palace immediately south of it in the time of Athaliah (842–837 B. C.), according to 2 Kings 11 : 16. Thus there were apparently processions of horses dedicated to Shemesh in the ninth century. It was Solomon (993–953 B. C.) who first imported horses from Que and Muzur, *i. e.*, Cilicia and Northern

Syria (1 Kings 11 : 28), and the foreign grooms who first handled them no doubt introduced the cult connected with them. Solomon's Tyrian architect brought in the huge Brazen Sea, held up by twelve oxen, a repesentation of the victory of the sun-god over the primitive sea-monster, Tehom-Tiamat. Its place was between the altar and the porch, where the sun-worshippers of Ezekiel stand. The Brazen Serpent, Nehushtan, whose proper name may have been Leviathan, as Cheyne thinks, and which Hezekiah destroyed (2 Kings 18 : 4), was probably a representation by this artist of the sun-god's victory over the chaos-serpent. And the pillars of the porch, Jachin and Boaz, were no doubt obelisks, dedicated in Jerusalem, as in Egypt, to the sun-god.

It was natural for Solomon in the midst of these surroundings to allude to Shemesh. There were many places dedicated to the sun-god, Beth Shemesh, En Shemesh, Kir Heres, Timnath Heres. Why not this sanctuary? The reference is almost apologetic. Shemesh is visible all the time, has his fixed abode in heaven, is not so much in need of a habitation. Yahwe, through some oracle, has expressed his wish; he is in need of a dwelling-place; though unseen, because he covers himself with darkness, he should be made to live constantly in Zion. There was less need of mentioning the other divinities worshipped in the temple, like Tammuz for whom women wept in the temple in the days of Ezekiel (8 : 14) and probably at all times, or Ash-

tart whom Solomon zealously worshipped (1 Kings 11 : 5). For Chemosh of Moab, and Milkom of Ammon, Solomon built special sanctuaries on the mountain in front of Jerusalem, no doubt the Mount of Olives (1 Kings 11 : 7), so that they may not have been among the synnaic gods of the great temple.

Solomon was far from being a monotheist. The author of the Book of Kings had before him sources telling of the gods he worshipped and the sanctuaries he built to them. He threw the blame for what seemed to him an apostasy from Yahwe on the women of his harem. The wise king himself would probably not have understood the necessity for such an apology, any more than he would have understood the indignant question of a later poet: "Heaven is my throne, and earth my footstool; What house would ye build for me, and what place as my habitation?" (Isa. 66 : 1), or the sentiment of John 4 : 21: "Neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father."

## XXIX

### THE TAUNT-SONG ON SENNACHERIB
(2 Kings 19 : 21–28)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Jerusalem laughs at thy threats, thou blasphemer of the Holy One of Israel (2 Kings 19 : 21–24)

She laughs at thee, despises thee,
The virgin daughter of Zion;
She only shakes her head at thee,
Jerusalem's fair daughter.

Whom hast thou scorned and whom blasphemed,
Against whom hast thou raised thy voice,
And lifted up thine eyes on high?
The Holy One of Israel!

By messengers thou hast provoked
Yahwe, and said: "I will ascend
With chariots the mountains high,
The deepest woods of Lebanon:

"Its cedars tall, its choice fir-trees,
Its farthest lodge I will cut down;
Strange waters I will dig and drink,
Will with my foot dry Egypt's stream,"

"Hast thou not heard it from afar,
What I have done in ancient times?
I bring about what I have planned:
Thou shouldst make cities into heaps.

Didst thou not realize that thou art my tool? (19:25, 26)

"The dwellers in them have no power,
They wither up like the field's herbs,
The green grass, on house-top the flower,
The field of grain, when east wind blows.

"Thy sitting down, thy going out,
Thy coming in, I know it well.
Because thy raging against me,
Thy pride has come into my ears.

I will summarily turn thee back (19:27, 28)

"My hook I will put in thy nose,
Will place my bridle in thy lips,
Will turn thee back the self-same way,
By which thou camest to this place."

### 2. *The Notes*

At the end of verse 25 the two words ***nişim*** and ***beşuroth*** should be removed.

### 3. *The Exposition*

Jerusalem laughs at Sennacherib's threats. He has blasphemed Yahwe and raised his hand against the Holy One of Israel by demanding that the city be given up to him.

The Assyrian has sent messages in which he has set forth his intention and power to take possession of the Lebanons in the north and Egypt in the south. His success has filled him with pride and arrogance. But he should know that all that he has accomplished was part of Yahwe's plan, was done with his permission. Now that he has ignored and provoked Yahwe he will no longer use him as a tool, but put his hook in his nose, as the Assyrian was fond of doing (cp. the Zenjirli stele where Esarhaddon holds two ropes at the end of which are hooks fastened in the noses of Tarhaka of Ethiopia, and Baal of Tyre), and turn him back to Nineveh. This taunt-song is ascribed to Isaiah. But if it had been uttered by him, or known as his, it would have been likely to have found a place in the Book of Isaiah. While something akin to his spirit may be seen in the conception of Yahwe's purpose, and of the Assyrian as a scourge in his hand, the idea that Jerusalem has no occasion to fear, sustains such relations to Yahwe that it can be without concern, will under all circumstances be protected by him, does not seem to be in harmony with Isaiah's genuine utterances. Yet the song may have come from the period and therefore been naturally ascribed to the great prophet living in Jerusalem at the time.

## XXX

### THE ORACLE AGAINST SENNACHERIB
(2 Kings 19 : 32–34)

#### 1. *The Translation*

He shall not come into this town,
He shall not shoot an arrow here,
He shall not bring against it shield,
Nor cast up against it a mount.

The way by which he came to it
He shall return. Yahwe has said,
"This town I will myself defend,
For David's sake who served me well."

#### 2. *The Exposition*

This oracle expresses the same idea as the taunt-song. When Sennacherib, in 701 B. C., invaded Judah, he took forty of its fortified towns, and then demanded the surrender of the capital. He was satisfied, however, with the very heavy tribute made by Hezekiah, and did not deem it necessary, or was unwilling under the existing circumstances, to lay siege against the city, and returned to Nineveh. This must have appeared to many as a remarkable intervention on the part of Yahwe, and it was natural that it

should be supposed to have been foretold, especially as there was a great prophet in the city. One can, therefore, understand how such an oracle was produced, even if it does not seem possible to accept it as having come from Isaiah himself.

## XXXI

### THE SONG OF YOUTH AND AGE
(Eccles. 11 : 7–12 : 7)

#### 1. *The Translation*

Youth is the time for the enjoyment of life (Eccles. 11 : 7–10)

Sweet is the light, good to the eyes
It is to see the shining sun.
Though many be the years he lives,
Man should in all of them rejoice.

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth,
Let thy heart cheer thee in thy prime,
Walk in the way thy fancy leads,
Follow what pleases best thine eyes,

Remove all worry from thy mind,
And from thy body banish pain;
For youth is but a passing breath,
Life's dayspring only vanity.

Old age is full of sorrows; the body gradually decays (12 : 1–5)

The days of evil will draw nigh,
The years in which no pleasure is,
When the sun's light to darkness turns,
And after rain the clouds appear;

When shake the keepers of the house,
The men of war are bending down;
The maids cease grinding in the mill,
The light is in the windows dim;

When to the street the doors are shut,
And low the sound of grinding is,
And feeble is the song-bird's chirp,
And silent all the sounds of song;

When of the hill there is a fear,
The almond-tree scorned in the way,
And the grasshopper leaps no more,
While no strength has the caper plant;

Until, at last, death comes (12 : 6, 7)

Until the silver cord is snapped,
And broken is the golden bowl,
The pitcher at the fountain cracked,
And at the well the wheel destroyed;

And to the earth the dust returns,
To the Most High the breath ascends,
To his eternal home man goes,
And in the street mourners lament.

### 2. *The Notes*

The second part of verse 8, "and let him remember the days of darkness, for great is all the trouble that shall come," is an interpolation. Probably from the same hand comes the warning "and know that for all this he shall bring thee into judgment," in verse 9b, as well as the similar admonition "and remember thy creator in the days of thy youth" (12 : 1). "Which thou shalt say" is an addition in verse 2, and the enumeration "and the light, and the moon, and the stars" is another. Verse 5b has apparently been transposed; its natural place is after verse 7.

### 3. *The Exposition*

The Song of Youth and Age is the only poetic part of the Book of Ecclesiastes. Whether it was remembered by the original author and copied into his text or added by a later scribe cannot be determined. Its date is likely to be the first century B. C. It counsels the enjoyment of the good things of life in youth before old age comes on with its ailments. A pathetic picture is drawn of the frailty and helplessness of age and its incapacity for enjoyment. The decay of the various members of the body is described, the legs, the arms, the teeth, the eyes, the ears, and the generative organs. The end of the process is that the blood pumped from the heart to the different parts of the organism ceases to flow. Death comes when the dust re-

turns to earth and the breath to God, and man goes to his everlasting home, the grave, leaving only the survivors to lament his departure. The deep sense of the desirability of life, the intrinsic worth of human existence, adds to the pathos of this song. It touches every heart because it sings the universal fate of man; it is at once a chant of death's advance even in the midst of life, and life's affirmation of its joy even in full view of death.

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or madrigals was entertained before Herder by Luis de Leon, René Rapin, Charles Cotin, Richard Simon, Jean le Clerc, Claude Genest, and others. Some of the Anabaptists seem to have shared the attitude of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Chateillon, Episcopius, and J. D. Michaelis. Grotius is the forerunner of the modern school of nuptial allegorists.

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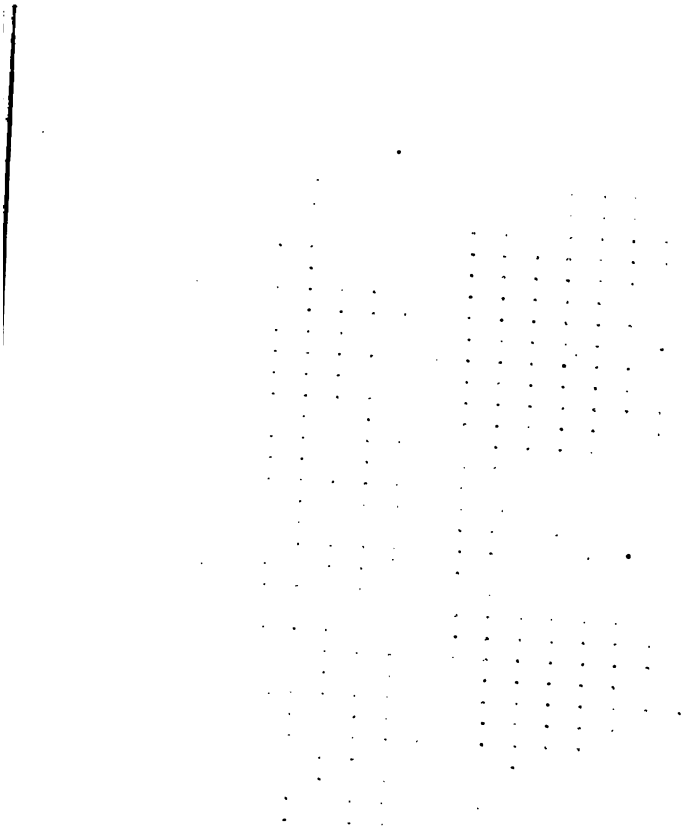

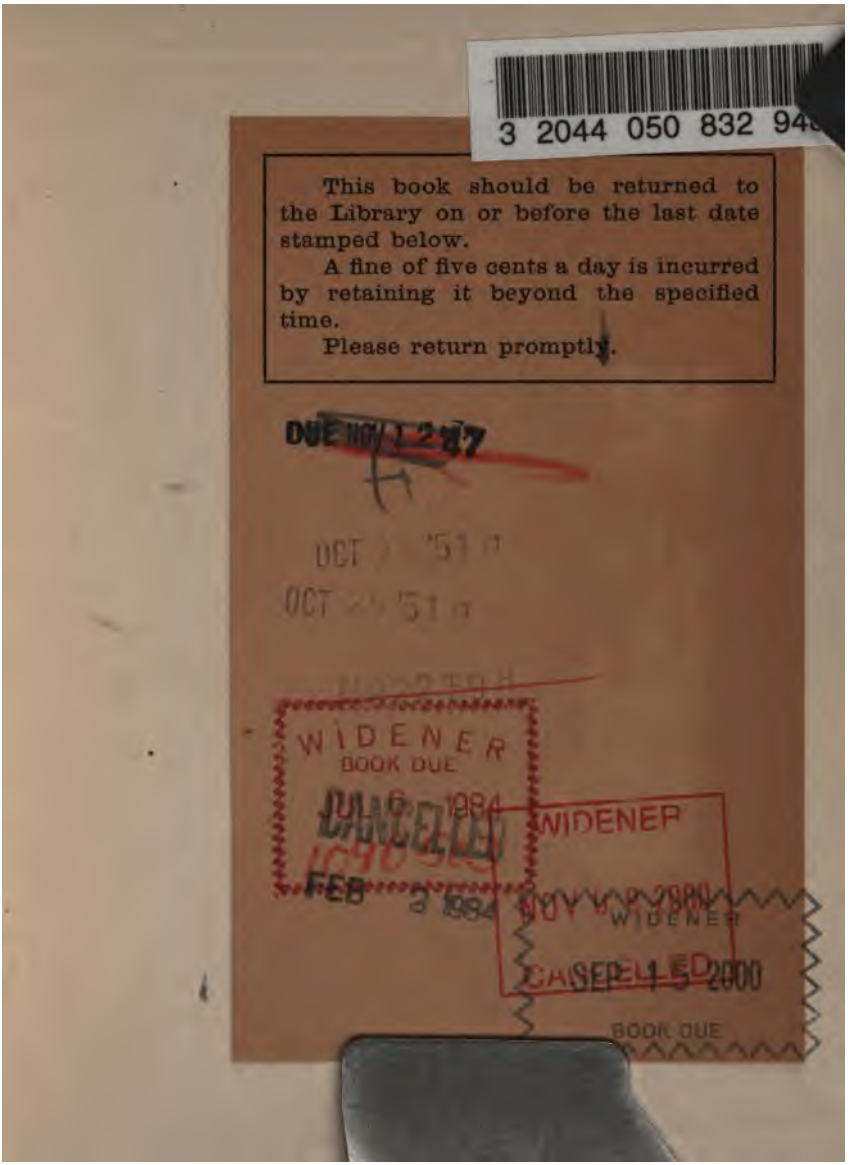
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